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HISTORY  
—OF—  
RICHMOND COUNTY,  
(STATEN ISLAND)  
NEW YORK,

From its Discovery to the Present Time.

Pt. I

EDITED BY  
RICHARD M. BAYLES.

"Staten Island! the name hath a charm to the ear;  
"Fair Island of Beauty!" "The Gem of the Sea!"  
Let other harps sing of the scenes ever dear,  
But none, be it tuned in its praises to thee.

"Thou 'rt like a vast garden of verdure and flowers—  
Spread out in the distance, enchanting to view;  
With its green, shady knolls and luxuriant bowers,  
Surrounded by waters of loveliest blue."

*Anon.*

NEW YORK:  
L. E. PRESTON & CO.

1887.





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## PREFACE.

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The preparation of a history like this involves the employment of a great variety of means, drawing from a multitude of sources. The compiler is frequently obliged to accept the statements of others without knowing upon what data those statements are made. The utter impossibility of any one man being able, during the brief term of one human life, to go to the bottom of every fact stated in a work of this kind must be too apparent to need explanation. There are a hundred ways by which errors may creep in. The editor can but use his best judgment as to the reliability of the authorities upon which he depends for statements, and his constant and most careful vigilance in guarding against erroneous statements. This he has done in the preparation of this work, and that vigilance has been rendered more effective by the experience the editor has had heretofore in the preparation of similar works in other fields.

Opportunity is taken here to make expression of our gratitude for the generous response with which requests for information have been met by the ministers of the different churches, the officers of different societies, and others who were in possession of special information that was desired, in general; and we would also make particular acknowledgment of the valuable assistance which we have received from Dr. James Brownlee, Alfred de Groot, James McNamee, Governor G. D. S. Trask, Sidney F. Rawson, County Clerk C. A. Hart, School Commissioner Theodore Frean, Professor N. L. Britton, the family of the late Gabriel P. Disosway, Dr. Arthur Hollick, Hamilton



Willcox, Ira K. Morris, William T. Davis and John H. Garretson.

The readiness with which these gentlemen have answered the calls of the editor for the assistance that each could give, has encouraged him through the many weary months of labor which the preparation of this volume has cost.

Besides all the sources of information and assistance which have been indicated there are many others which have been laid under contribution which we cannot mention specifically. Two of the most important, however, cannot be justly omitted. These are the "Annals of Staten Island," compiled by Mr. J. J. Clute, and the note books of Prof. Charles Anthon, both of which have been drawn upon for whatever they contained of sufficient value and as far as the limits of this volume would allow. The copyright of the former was purchased from the heirs of Mr. Clute, and the note books of the latter, from a relative in whose possession they were. These were gathered while he was a resident of the island and a professor in Columbia College, about 1850 to 1854, he at the time having in view the preparation of a history of the island, which project he afterward abandoned. From these note books we have obtained many important facts which have hitherto never been published, and we deem it especially fortunate that the books were discovered in time for those facts to be embodied in this work.





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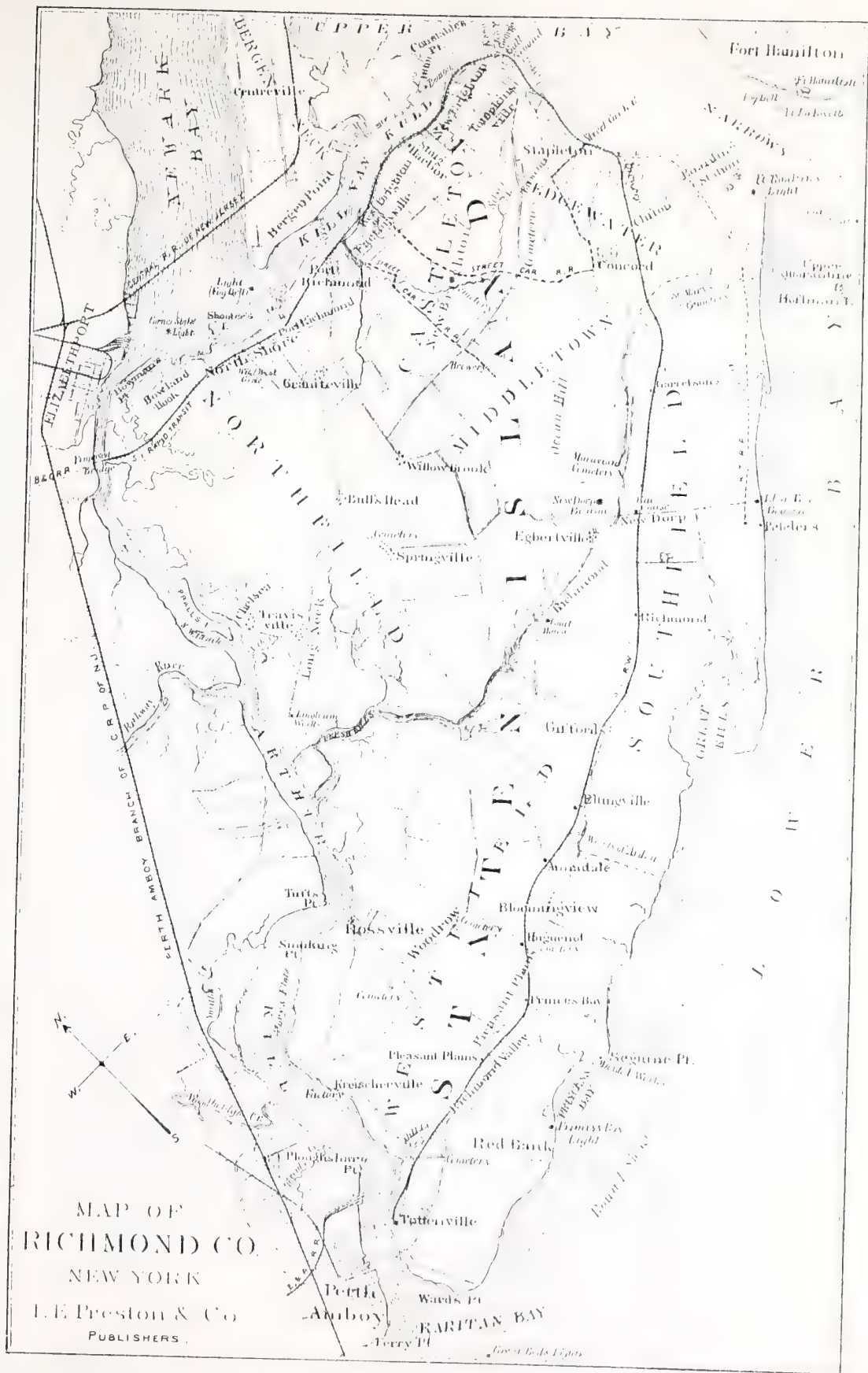
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# HISTORY OF RICHMOND COUNTY.

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## CHAPTER I.

### DESCRIPTION OF STATEN ISLAND.

(RICHMOND COUNTY.)

THE first thing we know of Staten Island is its name, and we trust it will not be considered out of place to introduce our subject by an explanation of its name. Its present form is an English rendering of the name given by the Dutch, "Staaten Eylandt." Hudson gave the name, which meant the "Island of the States," as a memorial to the states general, under whose flag he was sailing. By the native occupants it was called "Aquehonga Manacknong," and sometimes "Eghquahous," which was probably only a slight variation of the first part of the former. Schoolcraft interprets "Aquehonga Manacknong," *as far as the place of bad woods.* The meaning of "Eghquahous" is also interpreted *the place of bad woods.* It is not easy now to see the application of such a name, unless it was that the woods here were dense, and perhaps filled with tangled undergrowth, that made it difficult to move through them in pursuit of game or to secure good aim upon it.

The Island lies in or upon New York bay, but closely drawn to the New Jersey shore. It is separated from the latter by Newark bay and a narrow estuary called Kill von Kull on the north, and on the west by Staten Island sound, which is crooked and narrow but navigable by steamboats and river craft. The south side is washed by the waters of Raritan bay, Prince's bay and the Atlantic ocean, while the main seaward channel of the Hudson river flows along its eastern shore. It lies centrally in latitude 40° 34', and longitude 2° 52' east from Washington, or 74° 8' west from Greenwich. The center of the



island is eleven miles southwest of New York city, one hundred and forty-three miles south of the state capital, and one hundred and ninety miles southwest by an air line to the national capital.

With respect to its surrounding waters we can approve the remarks of J. Fennimore Cooper, who in his "Water Witch" locates a scene here. He says:

"The fine estuary which penetrates the American coast between the fortieth and forty-first degrees of latitude is formed by the confluence of the Hudson, the Hackensack, the Passaic, the Raritan and a multitude of smaller streams; all of which pour their tribute into the ocean within the space named. The Island of Nassau [Long Island] and Staten Island are happily placed to exclude the tempests of the open sea, while the deep and broad arms of the latter offer every desirable facility for foreign trade and internal intercourse."

Arthur kill separates the island on the west side from the New Jersey shore, and extends from Elizabethport to Perth Amboy. It is the grand highway for all the local commerce of the several ports and streams on the west side of Staten Island, as well as the inter-state commerce passing south and west through the Delaware and Raritan canal, which connects the Raritan river at New Brunswick with the Delaware river at Trenton. This canal is one of the principal links in the chain of internal navigation of the Atlantic seaboard, and has a tonnage amounting to about two millions annually passing through it.

What may be said in regard to the commerce of Arthur kill is equally true of Kill von Kull, and perhaps in a still greater degree. The latter extends from New York bay to Newark bay, separating the north shore of Staten Island from the New Jersey shore at Bergen Point. Through this channel must pass the great bulk of the commerce already mentioned and that of Newark bay and its tributaries in addition.

Neither of the channels mentioned, however, can compare in the importance of its commerce with that of the channel which lies along the east side of the island. That is the gateway through which is constantly passing the commerce of our own great nation with all other nations of the earth. Thus we see Staten Island is peculiarly situated, as it were in a whirlpool of the commerce of a hemisphere.





In passing, let us notice the names of the bodies of water that surround the island. The water now known as the kills was first called by the Dutch "Het Kill van het Cul," meaning *the Kill of the Cul*. The Dutch word "Kill" meant a stream or creek, while the word "Cul," perhaps borrowed from the French, meant a bay. Hence Kill von Kull was "the stream of the bay," the appropriateness of which name is seen in the fact that it connects the two bays of New York and Newark. "Achter Cul," as Newark bay was called by the Dutch, meant the "*Back bay*." The narrow body of water known as Staten Island sound, to which the name Arthur kill is also attached, was perhaps regarded as only a part of the "back bay," and so the name of the larger body, slightly corrupted, was appropriated to the smaller arm. A reef in the bay at the mouth of the Kill von Kull was once frequented by seals, to which the Dutch gave the name Robyn; hence the name "Robyns Rift," which has by careless usage become "*Robbins Reef*."

The shores of the island are designated with respect to the points of the compass, as follows: The region from the Fort to Billop's point is called the South Shore; from the latter point to the junction of the sound with the kills is known as the West Side; from the latter point (to which the name Howland's hook has been applied, with reference to the meadows, and De Harf's point to the knoll of upland which overlooks it) to where the kills meet the waters of New York bay is called the North Shore; and thence to the point of departure the East Side.

The shape of the island is that of an irregular triangle. The longest line that can be drawn through it, from the extreme northeastern to the extreme southwestern point, is a few feet more than thirteen and a half miles; while the longest line that can be drawn across it, from the shore of the sound near Buckwheat island to the shore at the light-house near the Narrows, is two hundred feet over seven and three fourths miles. It contains about seventy-seven square miles, or 49,280 acres.

The topography of the island corresponds in general with that of Long Island, being in the northern part hilly and stony, and in the southern part flat and sandy. But in detail the surface is more diversified. The island may justly claim attention for the beauty of its landscapes, presenting, as they do, so many mutations in character, through high, boldly precipitous Middletown, diversified Castleton, gently undulating Westfield,



rolling Northfield, and low, more or less flat and marshy South field. Two prominent ranges of hills extend partially across the island, in different directions, one being near the eastern shore and touching it at both ends. This extends from New Brighton, on the northeastern extremity, where it reaches an elevation of 310 feet, and sweeping inland behind Tompkinsville and Stapleton, comes out again upon the shore of the Narrows, with such precipitous form as to suggest the name of Clifton. The second may be said to commence to the south and just in the rear of West New Brighton, and extends southward, rising as it advances, till it nearly reaches New Dorp, when it swerves away to the westward and settles down again on the shores of the Fresh kill. This reaches its greatest height in Toad or Todt hill, which has an elevation of 370 feet above tide. Still farther west it makes a prominent elevation in Richmond Hill. At La Tourette's hill, still farther, it overlooks the village of Richmond, and there you gaze far away over green, wooded, rolling Westfield, while Fresh kill runs at its base, nearly dividing the island in two.

To the southeast of this hilly region, which by the way may be described as covering the northeast quarter of the island, is a level, and probably alluvial, tract of country, composed of upland and salt meadow extending to the ocean, where it is designated as the south shore. To the northwest of the "hill country" the surface is undulating, gradually declining to level upland and salt meadows. Almost every farm in the county is furnished with several acres of this meadow, from which large quantities of grass are annually taken without any expense for fertilizing or renewing.

The island is well watered with springs, some of them very copious, and all of them affording water of excellent quality. These are the sources of numerous rivulets and brooks which irrigate the surface in all directions. At Springville, on the western part of the island these native waters burst from the soil in such spontaneous abundance as to suggest a name for the locality. The water of these springs is very cold and pure. Their value in the arts has been discovered by the proprietors of several large breweries and dye works as well as by the projectors of public water works. On this subject the following extract from the report of investigations made in 1876 by Mr. Clarence Delafield, C. E., in regard to the available



sources of water supply for the village of New Brighton, will be found very interesting:

“West of Port Richmond and Graniteville lies a sandy surface soil; under this is an impervious clay of considerable depth, under which again is a stratum of gravel that extends westward under the sound into New Jersey for a long distance. This gravel is the storage reservoir for the drainage of an immense district. Springs break out at or near tide water in large numbers in Mariners’ Harbor. At Singer’s factory in Elizabethport, the well that furnishes the factory is sunk through this clay stratum to the gravel, and furnishes a large volume of water. I feel confident that an ample supply can be found in this region for pumping.

“The geological formation is peculiar. From the Palisades on the Hudson river, the trap rock is seen running in a south westerly direction, generally depressed as it passes under Bergen hill, thence passing under Bergen Point and the Kill von Kull, emerging at the water side of Jewett’s residence, Port Richmond, passing thence to the quarries at Graniteville, and from there dipping under the Fresh kill, is lost sight of until discovered on the Raritan river between Perth Amboy and New Brunswick. West of this line lies the white and blue clays of various depths, forming impervious strata, covering the water bearing gravel.

“East of the line of trap described is another step of the same rock, noticed at Bergen Point, at Gunther’s residence, but only found on the island, in digging wells just east of the Pond road.

“Between the Pond and Mill roads there is a depression of the rock, and wells forty feet in depth pass through a stratum of water proof clay into a stratum of gravel, the reservoir of drainage of the surface above of limited area, the water rising and falling with the rains, and often chalybeate in taste from the deposits of hematite iron in the hills above.

“East of this line and at many points the serpentine rock comes to the surface, and on Todt hill rises to an altitude of about 370 feet above tide-water. Below the serpentine rock should occur the carboniferous strata and old red sandstone, also the Silurian rock overlaying the gneiss and granite. I believe that the serpentine rock rests upon the gneiss rock, the usual intermediate rock being absent, and the reason for this





belief is that the gneiss rock of New York city is observed dipping under the bay, rising to form Robin's Reef, and extending west to the beacon opposite New Brighton, probably passing under Staten Island at the same rate of dip.

"As the result of observation of American and European engineers, the magnesian limestones are prolific water bearing rocks, and the primitive gneiss liable to fissures and stratification leading from great distances and bearing water of great purity. The granite from its freedom from fissures or strata, and irregular contour may form good basins, but rarely carries water far. Geology is by no means an exact science, as far as determining without experimental examination the probable strata or their water bearing conditions, but the above mentioned conditions are an assistance in an intelligent consideration of the subject now under investigation.

"I find by observation, that there is a series of admirable springs commencing at the famous Hessian springs, near Lafayette and Brighton avenues, below Silver lake; also the Bement boiling springs, then various lesser springs, to the large springs at the Four Corners or Constanx brewery, and so on to the Willow brook and down to Springville. I have estimated, and find the amount of water discharged is vastly in excess of any surface drainage on the higher grounds of the island adjacent, and am thus led to the belief that these springs arise from the rock below, and have their source on hills far distant."

The climate of the island is subject to frequent and sudden changes of temperature, but is generally more mild than that of other localities in the same latitude farther away from the seashore. The mercury varies during the year between ninety degrees and zero, very seldom passing either of these extremes. The prevailing winds of winter are from the north or northwest. In summer the south shore receives a breeze from the ocean almost daily, and southwest winds prevail throughout the island. Being surrounded by salt water the island is naturally subject to fogs, especially about the shores, though they seldom penetrate far into the interior. They are prevalent toward spring and continue to occur at times until June or July and occasionally at other seasons. Thunder showers in summer sometimes suddenly arise in the north and are wafted over the island on



heavy gusts of wind, and are occasionally accompanied by a fall of hail stones.

The island has long been celebrated for the salubrity of its climate, except perhaps for affections of the lungs and throat. There are few localities on the continent where the number of instances of extreme longevity in proportion to the population can be equalled, many of them being more than centenarians. To show that the healthfulness of the northern part was recognized we quote from an announcement in 1788 as follows: "The healthy and clear westerly breezes on the one side, and the thick southerly atmosphere, abstracted by a ridge of hills on the other side, make it so healthy that it must induce gentlemen of fortune to purchase, who wish to lengthen out their days and enjoy all the temporal happiness this life can afford."

Some very cold winters have been recorded in the climatic history of the island. That of 1740-41 was unusually severe. Whenever alluded to it was spoken of as the "hard winter." Its extraordinary severity continued from the middle of November to the end of March. Snow fell to the depth of six feet on the level; fences were buried out of sight; domestic animals were housed during the whole period, and many of them perished; intercourse between neighbors was suspended for several weeks; physicians were not able to reach their patients because of the utterly impassible condition of the roads; many families suffered for want of bread while their granaries were filled with grain, because the mills were inaccessible; the roofs of dwellings and out-buildings in many cases were crushed by the weight of snow upon them; churches remained closed and the dead unburied. At length a day or two of moderate weather came and with a light, misty rain, softened the surface of the snow, which froze hard again, and formed a solid crust sufficiently firm to bear the weight of a horse. This for a time afforded great relief to the imprisoned people, and enabled them to procure fuel and other necessities. Again, the winter of 1761, beginning with January, was an exceedingly cold one, continuing until March, meanwhile the Narrows were frozen over. Another severe winter was that of 1768. Ten years later brought a recurrence of climatic severity, of which the following record, dated December 12, 1788, gives us a hint:

"The intense cold weather has, within these two days occasioned the quick-silver in the weather glass to fall four degrees



lower than has been observed for the last seven years; several ships, &c., and many lives have been lost by the monstrous bodies of ice floating in our Bay."

But perhaps one of the most memorable winters for its severity was that of 1779-80. The waters surrounding the island were then firmly frozen over, so that troops, cannon and military stores of all descriptions were conveyed hither from New York on the ice. Sleighs were driven across the Narrows and over New York bay on the ice. A New York paper (*Rivington's Gazette*) of January 29 has an item saying that several persons came from Staten Island to New York that day over the ice, and on the first day of January it records the fact that a four-horse sleigh made the same passage.









## CHAPTER II.

### NATURAL HISTORY OF THE ISLAND.

Geology,—Flora of the Island,—Animal Life,—Indian Relics.

IN the matter of geology Staten Island presents a great variety for so small a section of territory. For our representations of the subject we have drawn largely upon the facts gathered by the investigations of Dr. N. L. Britton, of Columbia College. He tells us that within the limits of this territory we find strata of the Archaean, Triassic, Cretaceous, Quaternary and Modern eras, each of which will be noticed in the order of its age.

*Archaean Strata.*—True granite occurs on the shore of the Upper bay, about four hundred feet southwest of the Pompanville steamboat landing, and directly in front of the old building known as Nautilus Hall. The surface of rock exposed at low tide is about eighty feet wide by fifty feet long; the rock disappearing at high-water mark beneath a hill of drift some fifteen feet in thickness. More of the same rock is exposed about two hundred feet south of this. Elsewhere on the island the granite is covered by newer formations. There is reason to believe, however, that it extends in a belt of unknown width all around the eastern edge of the main range of hills, covered by the glacial drift and Cretaceous strata to an unknown depth, and that the same belt continues in a southwesterly direction to Arthur kill, and thence across the state of New Jersey to Trenton, where it again comes to the surface.

At the exposure at Pompanville before spoken of, this granite is very coarsely crystalline in structure, and for that reason could never be very satisfactorily employed for building purposes. The feldspar is mainly orthoclase, occurs in large masses, and is greatly in excess of the other two constituents; the quartz varies in color from dark brown to nearly white; what mica there is appears to be muscovite. In places the last named mineral is absent, the rock being then a kind of peg-



matite or graphic granite. No stratification is observable, but the surface of the rock outcrop dips about fifteen degrees to the east. Mather calls this granite primary, and to the best of our present knowledge it belongs to the oldest geological formation in North America.

The magnesian rocks, serpentines, form the upper portion at least of the main series of hills. This rock originally is supposed to have been of very considerable thickness, for a large amount must have been removed by erosion; the serpentine area is estimated at about thirteen and a half square miles. It is impossible to estimate accurately the present thickness, but it is probably over one hundred feet. The most eastern exposed boundary of the serpentine rock is marked by a series of very sharp slopes, which are nearly continuous from Tompkinsville to Richmond, and in some places these are as straight and regular as they could be constructed. This regularity of the slope is a characteristic of these hills, and is not the least element of their beauty. It is not known how far east of the foot of these hills the serpentine extends, but it is probably no great distance, as the granite at Tompkinsville occurs within a few hundred feet of it. The southern end of the ridge descends rather gradually and is lost under the Freshkill marshes not far from Richmond. The western boundary of the formation, or more properly the eastern limit of the Triassic sandstone which rests upon it, cannot be accurately located, as there are no outcrops, and any attempt to designate it would be speculative and only approximate.

The magnesian rock varies in color from light green to nearly black, and in texture from compact to quite earthy, much of it being fibrous. Its specific gravity is about 2.55, and in chemical composition it is all a hydrated magnesian silicate. The best exposures are at several places around the base of Pavilion hill at Tompkinsville; in cuttings for streets in the village of New Brighton; near the school house at Garretson's station; on Meissner avenue near Richmond, and near Egbertville. The highest point of the ridge is nearly opposite Garretson's station, and about half way across the hills, where the elevation measured by an aneroid barometer is four hundred and twenty feet. Among the interesting minerals associated with the serpentine rocks that have been collected at Pavilion hill and in New Brighton are compact and fibrous serpentines, marmolite,



silvery talc, apple green talc, gurhofite, dolomite, calcite and chromite.

Near the new railroad terminus at St. George's there was formerly an outcrop of very tough actinolite rock. This has been covered by the filling in of the water-front at that place.

The metamorphic rocks of Staten Island are apparently a southern continuation of those of Hoboken, N. J., and New York island, their strike, position with regard to the other rocks, and their composition being generally alike or nearly so. The serpentines are supposed to have been originally highly magnesian limestones which by metamorphic agencies were brought in contact with highly heated carbonic acid and silica bearing solutions, which, by removing the greater part of the calcic carbonate and altering the magnesian carbonate to a silicate, left the rocks in the condition of hydrated magnesian silicates. During or at the close of this period of metamorphism, the eastern edges of the strata were tilted up, forming an elevated axis, while the extension of the formation to the westward was subsequently covered by the shale and sandstone deposited from the Triassic sea.

The true geological age of this belt of metamorphic rocks, which runs through Staten and New York islands, extends far northward through the New England states, where it has a wide expansion, and has been traced southward as far as North Carolina, is not definitely known. Perhaps of all the theories in regard to it, that which claims it to belong to the Laurentian age, as portions of the Highlands of New Jersey and the Adirondack mountains, is the one most generally held by those who have studied the evidences most thoroughly.

*Triassic Formation*—Strata of the Triassic age extend over the parts of the island bounded by the assumed western edge of the serpentine rocks, the submerged gneissic belt, Arthur kill and Newark bay. This area contains about fourteen and a half square miles. The rocks consist of red ferruginous shales and sandstones, which dip to the northwest, and are broken through by a dyke of diabase or trap rock. They are in part the eastern extension of the Triassic strata that cover so large a part of New Jersey.

The shales and sandstones are exposed in but few places and only in small quantities. They appear on Shooter's island and on the adjacent shore. Here the strata consist of shaly red



micaceous sandstone, which differs in no essential particular from that so abundantly exposed in eastern New Jersey. No fossils have hitherto been found in these rocks on Staten Island, and the exposed surfaces are not sufficient to warrant any great expenditure of time or labor in search for them.

The diabase ridge that disappears beneath the Kill von Kull at Bergen Point cuts through the red sandstone of Staten Island from Port Richmond to the Freshkill marshes, and appears as a low, long, round-backed hill, having a general strike of south 40 degrees west, thus being nearly parallel with the serpentine. Toward the south end its elevation is so little above that of the sandstone that its position cannot be well distinguished. The length of this outcrop is about five and three-quarters miles, and its width, measuring from its assumed eastern verge to where the sandstone covers it, has an average of less than half a mile. Both the eastern and western boundaries, however, are so much obscured by drift that their exact positions cannot be determined, and the outcrop may be wider or narrower than the most careful estimate would lead us to suppose.

The only places at which the diabase is exposed so as to be easily studied are at and near the so-called granite quarries at Graniteville and near Port Richmond. The rock is not a granite, but a coarsely crystalline diabase, mainly composed of angite and triclinic feldspar, which is probably labradorite. It has been found in well-digging within the belt that has been indicated, extending from Port Richmond to the Freshkill near its junction with the sound, in the water at Linoleumville, and in outcrops near Chelsea, on the road to Springville. It is noticeable here, as in other localities, that the trap-dykes seem to shun the exposed Archaean rocks and cling closely to the Triassic, none being found outside of the red sandstone era.

*The Cretaceous Formation.*—This, more or less covered by glacial and modified drift and salt meadows, extends through all points of the island lying east and southeast of the Archaean rocks. The area underlaid by it is therefore about twenty-eight and a half square miles. The strata consist of beds of variously colored clays and sands, dipping slightly to the southeast, and having a general strike of about south 45 degrees west. They are a direct continuation of the "Plastic Clay" division of the Cretaceous, so named by the New Jersey geologists, and lie at the base of the formation in eastern North America.





South of the terminal glacial moraine, the strata are generally covered by a deposit of grayish yellow sand and gravel of variable thickness, known as the "Yellow Drift." This is seen on the island only in the vicinity of Tottenville, for the area lying southeast of the moraine near New Dorp and Garretson's is covered with modified drift, imperfectly stratified. These Cretaceous strata of clay and sand extend eastward to Long Island, where their extent is unknown. The clays are white, yellow, brown or black. They appear on the surface at a number of places, and the purer varieties have been extensively used in the manufacture of fire brick, drain-pipe, gas-retorts and other refractory ware. White clays outcrop on the road just north of Rossville, at various places south of Rossville and near Kreischerville, along a stream near Prince's bay. They have been noticed near Gifford's, and are said to occur at the bottom of a well near New Dorp, and perhaps may be found in other localities.

The extension of this formation to the east is indicated by an outcrop of buff-colored clay on the shore of the Lower bay about one-half mile south of the Elm-Tree light-house. The fact that all the pits from which clay has been taken are in the region between Rossville and Kreischerville does not prove by any means that clay occurs only in that neighborhood. It is probable, on the contrary, that the beds extend with some interruptions, across the island, but are deeply covered by the drift hills of the moraine, and materials washed from these which cover all the territory assumed to be underlaid by the clays, except that portion where pits have been excavated.

Thin beds of Limonite iron ore, of limited extent are found interstratified with and overlaying the clays and sands. This substance frequently cements the sand and gravel, and forms a conglomerate of variable coarseness. Hitherto this iron ore has not often been discovered in sufficient quantities or sufficient purity to warrant its use in the manufacture of iron. Lignite and pyrites are frequently found in the clay excavations. The former substance may also be seen on the shore of Arthur kill, near Rossville, and in a ravine a short distance northeast of the same village, after slides of the banks occur. It is generally impregnated with the pyrites, and with copperas which manifests itself upon exposure to the air for a little time. No fossil leaves or shells have been found in the clays of the island,



though it is not improbable that they may be found in more extended excavations than have been made.

As these beds are composed of fragments of quartz, mica and clay, or decomposed feldspar, it is evident that they are the products of the disintegration of gneissic or granitic rocks. That they have not been formed in place, but have been deposited from suspension in water, is proved from their stratification and by the assorted state of the materials composing them. That the waters that deposited the clays were fresh, is indicated by the absence of fossil marine organisms, and the presence of shells apparently allied to the modern fresh-water genera, in the clays of New Jersey.

*The Quaternary Epoch.*—Deposits of material brought from the north by the ice of the glacial epoch, are found distributed over the greater part of the island, but do not entirely overspread it. The most southern terminal glacial moraine crosses the island from the Narrows to Tottenville, and is distinctly marked by a continuous line of hills. These hills mark the farthest southern extension of the ice-sheet, and the line along which the glacier deposited much of its burden of boulders, pebbles, sand and clay, which it had torn from the rocks in its southward journey. In many places these hills have the peculiar lenticular form which they assume on Long Island and in the Eastern states. The moraine has been partially removed by the wash of the waves from Prince's bay northward to near the Great kills, leaving a bluff of variable height.

The glacier moved across the island in a south-southeasterly direction. This is proved by the markings on the trap-rock near Port Richmond, which have about that bearing. The surface of this rock is also smoothed like portions of the Palisades and Newark mountains. There are no such markings on the serpentine rocks, because they are too soft to retain them. The ice extended over their whole area, however, with the exception of a small area on Todt hill, which is east of the moraine. North and west of the morainal hills the drift is not so abundant, and rarely forms hills of any considerable size. But boulders are to be found over all this area, except when it is covered by newer formations and the soil is often very clayey.

Diabase of various degrees of coarseness is the most abundant rock in the drift. This has been carried from the Palisades and the Newark mountains, and probably in part from the



trap-dyke on the island itself, and is found over the whole drift area. Gneiss of various kinds, largely syenitic, is perhaps the next most abundant rock, and occurs often in very large masses. One of these large boulders rests directly on the top of Fort Hill, New Brighton; another along a roadside near Pleasant Plains, and a third worthy of notice lies in a field near Huguenot.

Moderately large boulders, both of trap and gneiss, abound on the moraine between the Narrows and Garretson's. The gneiss has come either from the New Jersey Highlands or from much farther northward, and perhaps in part from New York island. Triassic red sandstone, carried from New Jersey or from the northwestern parts of the island, is often met with. A specimen impregnated with copper salts was obtained from the bluff at Prince's bay. This locality has yielded many other interesting specimens illustrating the material brought by the glacier. Among these may be mentioned Potsdam sandstone, a number of rocks of Helderberg limestone, a specimen of granite containing graphite, a cherty rock which may belong to the Corniferous, and a conglomerate of uncertain age, but thought to be of the Oneida epoch. A boulder of Hamilton limestone occurs near Richmond, and a rock containing galena was found in some excavations near New Brighton.

It is evident that the ice-sheet passed entirely over the clay beds of the Cretaceous formation in the vicinity of Rossville, apparently without deteriorating them to any great extent. At first sight it would appear that these soft, unconsolidated strata would have been greatly eroded and almost entirely removed down to the bed-rock, by such an immense mass of ice moving over them, but although some was undoubtedly carried away, the ice seems to have swept across the clays without cutting into them very much. South and east of the drift line (which flows in general in a course parallel with the south shore of the island in some places running inland a mile or more for short distances) boulders are almost entirely absent, being chiefly found in the beds of brooks, where they have been carried by water since glacial times, and are never very large.

Modified drift, or material derived from the glacier, but more or less sorted and stratified by water, may be seen on the plains lying east of the moraine from near Gifford's to Clifton. The soil over this area is seen in well-diggings to be imperfectly



stratified, and to consist of loam and sand, with few pebbles and fewer boulders. On Todt hill, near the moraine, there is quite an extensive deposit of gravel colored yellow by oxide of iron; this is the pre-glacial drift, which has a greater development farther south in New Jersey. Occasionally some stratification may be seen in the morainal hills themselves, but these are generally very heterogeneous in composition. Modified drift also occurs in small quantities along the edge of the moraine near Tottenville. The true glacial drift in this vicinity is not thick, but generally forms a mere mantle over the Cretaceous strata, and was probably deposited by a local projection of ice in advance of the main glacier.

The era of the formation of limonite iron ore deposits is only provisionally referred to the Quaternary. Their deposition is supposed to have begun long before the glacial epoch, but since the magnesian rocks, upon which they rest. These beds of iron ore are found resting directly upon the serpentine or talcose rocks at a number of places, in some of which mining has been carried on. All the deposits have the same general characteristics: they are superficial, though sometimes covered by glacial drift to a variable depth. The ore consists of the hydrated sesquioxide of iron, limonite, and is either compact or quite earthy in texture, and is associated with colorless, green and red quartz. It has been extensively mined near Four Corners, at several places on Todt hill and Richmond terrace, and along the Clove road, and is known to occur at several places on the serpentine hills. The deposits vary from a few inches up to twenty feet or more in thickness, and their lateral extent is limited to a few hundred feet in any direction. The Todt hill mines are the only ones wholly uncovered by glacial drift, being east of the moraine.

These superficial deposits have probably had their origin in the deposition of the material composing them from the waters of thermal springs, which have come to the surface through crevices in the serpentine. The iron in the solutions was probably in the form of the carbonate, which on reaching the surface became oxidized by contact with the atmosphere, and was thrown out of solution and deposited as the hydrated sesquioxide, as we now find it. Magnetic iron sand occurs with the limonite in one of the deposits on Todt hill. This was prob-





ably washed in mechanically while the hydrated oxide was being deposited from solution.

Extensive deposits of light-colored sand, similar in character to those found so abundantly on Bergen neck, occur along the edges of the salt meadows on the western side of the island, from Mariner's Harbor to near Chelsea landing, sometimes extending to a distance of one-half to three-quarters of a mile on the upland, and thus occupying a position between the trap-dyke and the salt meadows. The material is a fine, yellowish, loamy sand, containing no gravel or pebbles, but rests on the glacial drift, and is hence of post glacial age. This sand was once the western beach of the extensive body of salt water which formerly occupied the basin now filled with the salt-marsh deposits, and which extended over all the Newark and Hackensack meadows, but has now been reduced to the area of Newark bay. The sands of this old beach were blown inland, and formed into dunes by the generally prevailing westerly winds. On a windy day the manner of the formation of these dunes may still be plainly seen. A number of pine barren plants have been found lodging in this sandy soil, both on the island and on Bergen neck, and it is probable that others may be found when more exhaustive explorations are made.

*Modern Epoch.*—Under this head are included deposits whose formation began at a comparatively recent period, and whose growth still continues.

Deposits of marine alluvium or salt meadows extend over an area of about nine and one-half square miles of the island. The material composing them consists for the most part of partially decomposed vegetable matter mixed with a little clay and sand. These salt meadow areas have once been shallow bays, which have gradually been filled up, first by the deposit of silt from their waters and the growth of marine plants, and ultimately by the growth and decay of grasses and rushes. This latter process is yet in operation, and thus the salt meadows keep at about the level of the highest tides. Their most abundant grass is the *Spartina juncea* (Willd.), while the rush is *Juncus Gerardi* (Lam.), commonly known as "black grass." A number of other plants contribute small amounts to the vegetable growth, making the salt-meadow flora quite a varied one. The most extensive areas covered by these deposits are along New creek and the Great kills, on the eastern shore, and from Rossville



northward along Arthur kill. The thickness of the marshes is exceedingly variable, probably as much as thirty feet in some places and but a few inches in others. The dried material consists of decaying fibres mixed with a little clay, sand and oxide of iron. The latter substance produces the iridescent film commonly seen in the marshes, and popularly supposed to be oil.

Sand beaches occur along all the shores that are directly exposed to the waves. The greatest accumulations of sand are on the shore of the Lower bay, from Clifton southward to the so-called Point of the Beach, near Gifford's, at Seguin's point, near Prince's bay, and at Ward's point. The point near Gifford's is slowly lengthening and curving in toward the shore, and a similar point is in process of formation at the mouth of New creek. The accumulation of sand at Ward's point, below Tottenville, is also quite great. These points are produced by the combined action of the currents of the Lower bay and the streams flowing into it, which carry the sand along the coast until finally it is driven up on the beaches by the waves.

Sands composed of magnetic iron ore occur with the quartz sand, and are generally found in layers of a fraction of an inch in thickness, but an accumulation of this material to a depth of four inches has recently been found at low water on the beach near the Elm Tree light-house, but it contains titanium and is not likely to be of much economic importance. All the sands originally resulted from the disintegration of rocks, and have been carried by water down the rivers emptying into the bays, and have also resulted in part from the direct disintegration of the coasts.

True peat occurs in but few places on Staten Island. Some is found in the Clove Lake swamps, in several swamps near Richmond and Gifford's, and toward Tottenville. In one locality near Richmond the peat deposit is at least ten feet thick.

The entire southeastern shore of Staten Island is gradually being washed away. In some places the loss is very apparent. At the foot of New Dorp lane, near where the Elm Tree light-house now stands, a large American elm was standing not longer ago than 1840. The place where it grew is now beyond the end of a dock which extends some four hundred feet into the water. This indicates an average wasting of at least ten feet per year from the shore. At Cedar Grove, half a mile south of this point, there has been a loss of about three hundred and fifty



feet since 1850, which shows about the same average. At Prince's bay the government has been obliged to build a heavy sea wall in front of the bluff on which the light house is placed, and a like precaution has been taken at the forts on the Narrows.

The two causes operating to effect the wasting of the coast are the constant abrading action of the waves and currents, and the gradual depression of the coasts. By the course of the prevailing currents in the Lower bay the eroded material, together with part of that brought down by the rivers, is carried southwardly along the coast, the sands being deposited as beaches, bars and points, while the finer, muddy part is carried farther, and finally deposited in the deeper waters of the bay, or out into the ocean. The land on the shore is sometimes protected by building bulkheads of stone or other substantial material, running out some hundreds of feet against the southern part of the shore to be protected. Such bulkheads break the force of the sand-bearing currents and cause them to drop their burdens of sand on the north side of the obstruction, and the waves drive it up on the shore, thus actually making land. The other cause of the decadence of the coast is found in its gradual depression. Prof. George H. Cook has estimated that the shores of New Jersey and Long Island are suffering a depression of about two feet every hundred years. Others vary this estimate slightly, but it is agreed by all that there is a sinking of the shores slowly but continually going on. It will be seen that if this coast settles down to ten feet below its present level, the greater part of the plains extending south of the moraine from Giffords to Clifton, now the most valuable land in the county, will be covered with salt meadows within a few hundred years, provided they are not sooner washed away by the action of the currents.

We must close this interesting subject with a few words on the economic uses to which the geological products of the island have been applied. The limonite ore of Todt hill, Four Corners, and other places, has been used in blast furnaces in connection with other more refractory ores, or has been screened, ground and washed, to produce red ochre paint. The total amount hitherto mined may be as great as 300,000 tons. Fire clay is employed in the production of refractory ware, at Kreischerville, of which mention has already been made. Clays



of glacial drift origin are used in the manufacture of common brick near Richmond and Linoleumville. Quarries of trap rock have been worked at Graniteville and near Port Richmond for many years. The rock is either cut into blocks and shipped to New York to be used for street pavements, or crushed into small pieces and employed in MacAdam or Telford pavements on Staten Island. Some edifices have been constructed of this rock, but it is not well suited for building purposes. The fibrous serpentine rock, erroneously called asbestos, has been mined near Tompkinsville landing, to the extent of perhaps twenty-five or thirty tons, and used for the purposes for which asbestos is employed. Thousands of tons of beach sand are annually taken from the southeastern coast, and used in New York and Brooklyn for building purposes. In some places so much sand has been removed that property along the shore has been seriously damaged, by exposing roads and meadows to the action of the waves.

The variety in the geological formation, already described, exerts a powerful influence over the occurrence and distribution of the vegetation, which is surprisingly rich in its number of species. In 1879 Messrs. N. L. Britton and Arthur Hollick, to whom we are indebted for the facts which we give under this head, after three years of careful search and study, compiled and published a catalogue of the flowering plants with the ferns and their allies, known to grow on Staten Island independent of cultivation. This catalogue enumerated 1,050 species and varieties. The following year an appendix was issued enumerating forty-six more. In 1882 the second appendix was published containing sixty-seven additions. A third appendix, showing forty-six more, was issued in 1885, and now the fourth appendix is found necessary, containing a farther list of thirty-six species. In other words there are at the present time 1,245 species and varieties of wild plants known on Staten Island, which has an area of only about fifty-nine square miles, while the entire flora of New York state, covering an area of about 45,000 square miles, numbers only about 1,800. So that little Richmond county is the possessor of two-thirds of the state flora as known at the present time. About fifty of the species were not known in the state until discovered and reported from this county. The surprising richness, as previously stated, is





due in part to the fact that the cretaceous sands and clays in the region around Tottenville and Kreischerville carry with them a large number of the plants characteristic of that formation in New Jersey known as the "Pine Barren" flora; while the drift, which covers the rest of the island with a mantle of sand, loam, gravel and "hard pan," affords a home for many of the plants which occur to the north and up the Hudson river valley. There are also several species which are confined entirely to the ridge of serpentine or soapstone rock which forms the backbone of the island, extending from St. George to Richmond.

The physiographic conditions are also of importance, as the island occupies a position surrounded by salt water, besides having several large ponds of fresh water, running streams and perpetual springs. There are also high and dry hills, low and wet swamps, and some artificially-made ground. The latter has mostly been filled in with refuse, and ballast from vessels, and through this agency about thirty of the species have been introduced. The inevitable march of progress, while it has introduced a few plants, mostly troublesome weeds, such as the "pig-weed," "worm-seed," stramonium, amaranthus, and other pests of our fields and gardens, has destroyed and crowded out many of our native species, or completely destroyed them in certain localities where they were formerly abundant. The forest trees were the first to suffer, as they are in all communities in which immediate gain is counted higher than ultimate utility. The entire island, except on the salt marshes, was, it is said, originally covered with a thick growth, in which oak and chestnut predominated. In the time of the revolution, most of this forest was cut down, and there are now but comparatively few trees that have seen one hundred years of growth. The mass of the forest growth at the present time is probably about half that age, or a little more, although there are a few isolated examples which are noteworthy. One of the most conspicuous objects near Garretson's station is a huge white oak, standing alone in the middle of a field, on the south side of the track. In a little secluded valley to the north of the station is a chestnut whose trunk measures eighteen feet in circumference. It is, so far as known, the largest tree on the island, in regard to girth. The next largest is probably a white oak which stands in a field at Green Ridge. Its circumference is fifteen



feet two inches, and it is a remarkable object, but its existence is known by but few people, on account of its distance from any road.

The willow trees at the Billop house, Tottenville, follow next, the largest one showing a circumference of thirteen feet seven inches. Near Court House station are two of the finest examples of perfect symmetry in tree development to be found anywhere. They are both white oaks. One of them, with a circumference of eleven feet, is in a field close by the station, and the other is in a patch of woods about a quarter of a mile away. The latter one has a girth of eleven feet six inches, with branches that spread for a distance of thirty or forty feet, often almost touching the ground. A magnificent grove of white pine formerly flourished on the hill back of Clove lake, but within a few years it has been cut down. There are a few scattered groves of these trees in other parts of the island, notably in Westfield, and many fine specimens may still be seen there. In a swamp at the rear of the school house at Green Ridge are a number of elms, each averaging over eleven feet in circumference, and there are many beautiful specimens of this tree which have been planted, notably at New Springville. The sycamore is undoubtedly dying out for some reason, and probably the present generation will see its almost entire extermination. Almost the only really fine example of this tree now to be seen here is in front of a cottage on the north side of the road between Rossville and Kreischerville. Among the tallest trees the tulip tree will probably bear the palm. It is seldom very large in circumference, the greatest thus far measured being under ten feet, but no tree can present a finer spectacle when it is in full bloom.

The list of notable forest trees found here would not be complete without the sweet gum, which was the source of a gigantic hoax some ten years since. Its peculiar corky bark is familiar to most people, yet certain individuals found a ready sale for the branches in the streets of New York under the name of "alligator wood." A market was even found for it among the citizens of the island, many of whom brought it back with them as a great curiosity. The beech is abundant, and often conspicuous for its size. Several fine examples are to be seen standing isolated in the partially cleared land back of Clove lake. In one limited locality the sugar maple grows, in com-



pany with the slippery elm, but fortunately they have thus far escaped notice. Magnolias flourish in three widely separated localities--Tottenville, Giffords and Watchogue. The trees have been sadly mutilated by parties who gather the flowers for sale in New York, but as they grow in thick swamps they are not likely to be entirely exterminated until the swamps are drained and cleared. The red maple is one of the commonest trees in the lowlands, and is very conspicuous in the autumn, owing to the endless change in color which its foliage assumes. They often reach a considerable size, one in a swamp at Tottenville being twelve feet three inches in circumference, and hollow, so that a person can readily get entirely within the trunk. There are five species of dog-woods known here, but only one is familiar to any extent as a tree. This is the *Cornus florida* (L.), with large conspicuous white blossoms. The others hardly ever rise above the dignity of large shrubs or bushes. The well known evergreen holly (*Ilex opaca*, Ait.) was formerly far more abundant than it now is, although it still grows in considerable quantity in the vicinity of Richmond and Eltingville, and small scattered individual specimens are to be met with in nearly every part of the island. Not far from Giffords is a most beautiful example of this tree. The main trunk is four feet six inches in circumference, and each main branch measures two feet ten inches. Its height is about twenty-five feet, and the symmetry would be perfect except that some vandals have hacked off branches on one side, presumably for Christmas greens.

The catalpa, paulownia, and locust (*Robinia Pseudacacia*, L.) have all more or less escaped from cultivation and are thoroughly established in a wild state in many places: in fact the latter, there is good reason to believe, is native here. The ailanthus is likewise seeding itself quite extensively and seems likely to become a permanent feature. The two species of ash (*Fraxinus pubescens*, and *Fraxinus Americana*) are found sparingly throughout the island, but are mostly represented by isolated trees. The wild cherry is everywhere abundant and the cultivated one has been extensively planted in woods and copses through the agency of birds. Peach, pear and apple trees are also frequently met with in the woods and along old fence lines and hedge rows, where the seeds have been accidentally dropped. The sassafras is common and well known everywhere. The hackberry, or sugarberry (*Celtis occidentalis*,



L.) is plentiful in restricted localities, notably on Richmond hill and at Tottenville. Its peculiar warty bark and insect bitten branches always attract attention wherever seen. The white and red mulberry may now be found in nearly all parts of the island, distributed by birds from trees, a large part of which were planted during the silk worm craze some years ago. The remains of some of these plantations may yet be seen, being all that is left of the visions of silk culture that prevailed at the time they were planted. Many black walnut trees may yet be seen, some of them very imposing specimens. Their near relatives, the hickories, number five different species, common everywhere. (*Carya alba*, Nutt., *C. tomentosa*, Nutt., *C. porcina*, Nutt., *C. amara*, Nutt., and *C. microcarpa*, Nutt.) The first mentioned, which is commonly known as the "shag" or "shell bark," yields the hickory nuts of the markets. This species is plentiful enough in certain places on the south side to be of some economical importance. The oaks number ten different species. The chestnut, swamps, white and red oaks are known everywhere, forming the bulk of the woods, but the post oak (*Quercus obtusiloba*, Michx.) and black oak (*Q. nigra*, L.) occur only in a few places, notably Tottenville and Watchogue. The dwarf oak (*Q. prinoides*, Willd.) is also restricted to the same localities. It seldom grows more than six feet high and appears like a thick bush. The willow oak, (*Q. Phellos*, L.), so far as known, is represented by a single tree, growing in a swamp at Tottenville. The chestnut was formerly very abundant, and is yet along Ocean terrace, but it has been laid under such heavy contribution for fence posts and rails, telegraph and telephone poles, railroad ties, etc., that its complete extermination in the near future seems inevitable. Hornbeam or "iron wood" is plentiful, especially in wet places. There are three species of birch, two of which are common and well known, namely the black and white. The third, which is known as the red or "river birch" (*Betula nigra*, L.), is very rare, only a few trees being known, and they are on the borders of a pond near Bull's Head. These are likely to be destroyed very shortly, on account of certain changes now being made by the Crystal Water Company. There are nine willows, all common, in addition to the "weeping willow," which is so well known in cultivation. With the exception of the white (*Salix alba*, L., var. *vitellina*, Gr.) and the black (*S. nigra*, L.), they are shrubs





mostly confined to low or swampy situations. Botanically they are known as *Salix tristis*, Ait., *S. humilis*, Marshall, *S. discolor*, Muhl., *S. sericea*, Marshall., *S. lucida*, Muhl., *S. fragilis*, L., and *S. cordata*, Muhl. The poplars include, besides the well known cultivated species, the white, Lombardy, and "balm of Gilead," three wild ones, viz.: *Populus tremuloides*, Michx., commonly called "aspen," *P. grandidentata*, Michx., and *P. heterophylla*, L.

There are four species of pines, all comparatively plentiful. The pitch pine is found everywhere. The white and yellow pines are not so common, and the "scrub," or New Jersey pine, is found only in the neighborhood around Tottenville and Kreischerville, excepting for a few isolated trees near Four Corners. The cedar is very common, forming many beautiful groves at different parts of the island. Very large specimens are to be seen near the Billop house at Tottenville, and at Kreischerville. Two of these trees measure respectively 5 ft. 10 in. and 5 ft. 4½ in. in circumference. Only one specimen of the juniper is known to be in existence in the county. This is in the cedar grove at New Dorp, near the beach. Persimmons are very common at Tottenville and Kreischerville, although rarely met with elsewhere.

Among the shrubs and bushes are many highly ornamental species, besides some of economic importance. The common barberry is spreading quite rapidly, especially in the vicinity of Tottenville, where it is a conspicuous object in the autumn, on account of the drooping racemes of bright scarlet berries. Near the same locality the "burning bush" (*Buonymus atropurpureus*, Jacq.) has escaped from cultivation. The black-cap raspberry, high bush and trailing blackberries, are in some localities abundant enough to pick for market. The English hawthorne has become established in several localities, notably along a brook at New Dorp, where there are a number of very large bushes. Three varieties of the "shad bush" have been found here (*Amelanchier Canadensis*, T. & G., var. *Botryapium*, var. *oblongifolium*, and var. *rotundifolium*.) It sometimes grows large enough to be called a tree, as is the case at Tottenville, where there is one measuring 3 ft. 4½ in. in circumference. When in blossom this tree is a sight to behold, appearing in the distance like a bank of snow. Unfortunately some vandal has hacked off one of the main branches, thus



ruining its former symmetry. Small bushes are plentiful everywhere, and have attracted such attention that the florists have introduced them successfully for shrubbery. The witch hazel is plentifully distributed along nearly all the water courses and in wet locations generally. Probably the best known of all the bushes is the "nanny berry" (*Viburnum prunifolium*, L.) which is so abundant in a certain place near West New Brighton that it is called "nanny berry hill." It is used successfully for hedges, not only in rough places, but in cultivated gardens, and should be a favorite, as it is never winter-killed like so many of the introduced hedge plants. The "huckleberries" number six species, besides several varieties. The one which produces the huckleberry of the market is known as the "high" or "swamp huckleberry," although the others are all used more or less. In the vicinity of Watchogue they are abundant enough to be of some economical importance. *Kalmia latifolia*, L., better known as the "laurel," is still quite common, especially at Tottenville, but is too conspicuous and handsome a bush to stand long near a thickly settled community. The *Rhododendron maximum*, L., has already suffered for its beauty and has become completely exterminated on the island, within the memory of people now living here. The azalea seems destined to share the same fate, although not so rapidly. It has already disappeared from hundreds of acres where it was abundant a few years ago. Benzoin (*Lindera Benzoin*, Meisner) is common along nearly all water courses. The filbert nut forms a considerable part of the underbrush in certain places, and is scattered along hedge rows and the borders of woods in others. *Myrica cerifera*, L., the "wax myrtle" or "sweet bay," is common throughout, and was formerly the source from which the early settlers derived considerable of their tallow for candles and other purposes by boiling the berries. The alder (*Alnus serrulata*, Ait.) forms the bulk of the thick underbrush in swamps and along the borders of fresh water. *Rosa Carolina*, L., the swamp wild rose, is common in low places, and *R. lucida*, Erhardt, is abundant in drier locations. There are five species of sumach, including the too well known "poison ivy" (*Rhus Toxicodendron*, L.) They are plentifully distributed everywhere, with the exception of the "stag's horn sumach," which only occurs sparingly at Tottenville, Prince's bay and Ocean terrace.



Wild grapes are represented by four species, of which the large fox grape (*Vitis labrusca*, L.) is said to be excellent for preserves. It is the original stock from which the Isabella and other cultivated varieties have sprung. *V. aestivalis*, Michx. and *V. cordifolia*, Michx., known as "frost grapes," are common everywhere, the small black fruit being ripe late in autumn. The second named frequently attains a large size, climbing to the tops of the highest trees and becoming very thick at the base. A magnificent vine formerly grew in the ravine near the Kellet place, measuring 1 ft. 11 in. in circumference at a distance of about two feet from the ground. It was cut in two a short time ago, apparently for mere wanton destruction, and all traces of it will soon be obliterated. The "Virginia creeper" (*Ampelopsis quinquefolia*, Michx.) and "bitter sweet" (*Celastrus scandens*, L.) are rapidly gaining favor as ornamental vines for houses and fences. The autumnal tints of the first are unsurpassed by any other plant, and the bright orange and scarlet berries of the latter remain unchanged almost throughout the entire winter. The Chinese honeysuckle has escaped from gardens in places and may be seen climbing over trees and bushes, apparently perfectly at home. Such plants no doubt started from pieces thrown out in rubbish heaps. The wild honeysuckle or "woodbine" is quite common and is sometimes seen in cultivation. The "trumpet vine" is thoroughly established in fields and along hedge rows from Tottenville to Prince's bay, near the beach. *Ipomoea pandurata*, Meyer, sometimes called "wild potato vine" and "man-of-the-earth," is common at Tottenville, especially in the pine groves. The flower resembles a convolvulus, and the root is sometimes as large as a man's arm. It is deeply buried in the ground, however, and requires considerable digging to extract it.

"Catbrier" is common everywhere, forming dense and impenetrable thickets in places, affording fine cover for birds and small animals. The few game birds and rabbits that yet remain on the island owe their existence to this plant more than to almost any other cause. *Clematis Virginiana*, L., commonly called "clematis" and "virgin's bower," is extensively gathered for household decoration in the autumn, when the bunches of feathery tailed seeds are ripe. Another species of clematis (*C. ochroleuca*, Ait.) is abundant on Todt hill and near Rich-



mond. It is a low plant, about a foot or two in height, bearing heads of feathery seeds similar to the first mentioned. It is one of Staten Island's characteristic plants, as it is very rare in other parts of the United States, being known in but few localities, mostly in Pennsylvania and Virginia. Botanists from all over the country have made trips to Staten Island to collect specimens, and they are now contained in nearly all the large herbaria of the land. Another plant, rare elsewhere, is the "mouse-ear chickweed" (*cerastium oblongifolium*, Torr.) It grows in company with the latter, especially on and near Todt Hill, in the rear of the Moravian parsonage. About the latter part of May the flowers are in full bloom, forming conspicuous white tufts and masses. This locality will well repay a visit at this season of the year, as "bird's foot" violets and the delicate little "bluets" are at their best about the same time, and all grow in luxuriance together.

"Trailing arbutus" or "Mayflower" was, and is yet, abundant from Eltingville to Tottenville, near the salt water. Unfortunately its location is known to many people in both New York and Brooklyn, who organize "arbutus parties" every year and carry it away by basketfuls. There is no doubt that the near future will see its entire extermination if the present rate of destruction continues. It is one of the earliest flowers to bloom in the spring, generally showing itself before April, and sometimes during the first week in March. Other early flowers are the "liverwort," which is common everywhere, and the "whitlow grass" (*Draba verna*, L.), which is particularly abundant at Tottenville. In the warm sandy soil of the latter place it is sometimes in bloom during February, and may fairly be considered as our earliest spring flower. In company with it grows the "crane's bill" (*Erodium cicutarium*, L. Her.). This plant has been found in blossom there during every month of the year, the late flowers frequently holding on throughout the winter until the new blossoms appear in the spring. "Blood-root" is abundant in several restricted localities, which are fortunately not well known, and as the plant is in blossom very early it is out of bloom and inconspicuous before people are likely to be rambling through the woods. It grows well in the garden and might become a favorite. The common "water cress" has been introduced in several of the water courses and





thrives finely. Certain parties have for years been in the habit of gathering it for sale.

The violets, so familiar to all, number twelve species and varieties, all common, with the exception of *Viola tricolor*, L., *var arcensis*, which is the immediate ancestor of our garden pansy. A species of cactus (*Opuntia vulgaris*, Mill.) is common at Tottenville and South beach, and also sparingly on Todt hill. It readily bears transplanting, and is a beautiful object when in full bloom. *Dipsacus sylvestris*, Mill., the common "teasel," is thoroughly established along roadsides near Garretson's and Bull's Head, and in the brick yards at Green Ridge. The present plants are doubtless the offspring of those that were cultivated years ago when the hand-weaving of cloth was a home industry.

It will probably surprise some people to know that the island possesses nineteen species and varieties of "golden rod" and twenty-five asters. Many of these are well worthy of cultivation, but are too common to attract more than passing attention. In England, however, they are highly appreciated, and many of these species may be seen there adorning the gardens. Wintergreen grows in certain small patches, but is not abundant and does not seem to fruit very freely.

One of the most gaudy plants is undoubtedly the so-called "painted cup" (*Castilleja coccinea*, Spreng.). It is very abundant in the Clove lake swamp, but has not been found elsewhere. Both the yellow and red grow side by side. Several other rare plants make this place their home, among which may be mentioned the "grass of Parnassus" (*Parnassia Caroliniana*, Michx.) and the orchids *Calopogon pulchellus*, R. Br., and *Pogonia ophioglossoides*, Nutt. For many other plants, likewise, it is a favorite spot, and has quite a reputation among botanists as a favorite hunting ground.

The common "cranberry" is abundant in certain peat bogs near Richmond, and appears sparingly near Clove lake. It is likely soon to be exterminated in both localities, in the latter owing to a rise in the level of the water, and in the former on account of the drainage of the swamps. Its flourishing condition at Richmond suggests the possibility of utilizing the peat bogs for its culture.

It is a noteworthy fact that nearly all our worst weeds are plants that have been introduced and are now naturalized. Among



these may be mentioned *Galinsoga parviflora*, Cav., which was unknown here a few years ago, but has already become a nuisance in many places. Its advent is so recent that, although very abundant, no common name has yet been given to it. The eleven species of *Chenopodium* and *Amaranthus*, known as "wormseed," "pig weed," "prince's feather," etc., are familiar objects in all waste places, rubbish heaps, and cultivated grounds. They are all introduced plants.

"Mistletoe" has been reported, on good authority, from the neighborhood of Clifton, but no specimens have been preserved and it has not recently been found. Twenty-four species of orchids, several very rare, are known to occur here. The "ladies' slipper" (*Cypripedium acaule*, Ait.) is the most conspicuous and is very abundant at Tottenville, Watchogue and one or two other points. The "crane fly orchis" (*Tipularia discolor*, Nutt.) is abundant in most of the deep woods, but is so inconspicuous as to escape general attention. The so-called "screw plants" belong here, of which there are four species, two of which are worthy of mention. They occur only at Tottenville and are not very common there. These are *Spiranthes simplex*, Gray, and *S. graminea*, Lindl. var. *Walteri*, Gray.

The rushes and sedges number about ninety, and the grasses about one hundred and twenty species. The ferns show twenty-eight species, of which the rarest and least known is probably *Cystopteris fragilis*, Bernb. It is confined to a little rocky valley near Egbertville. "Maiden's hair" is everywhere abundant, as is also the common "shield fern," which is evergreen. The "scouring rush" (*Equisetum hyemale*, L.) is abundant at Tottenville on the bluff overlooking Raritan bay. There are five species of "club moss" or "lycopodium," so well known as "ground pine" and used for Christmas decorations. They are, however, none of them sufficiently abundant to be of any economical value.

The herbarium from which the original catalogue and appendices were compiled is now in the possession of the Natural Science Association, and is one of the most complete local herbariums in the country. Lists of the lower forms of plant life (Mosses, lichens, &c.) are in course of preparation by different members of the Natural Science Association, but it will take many years yet to make them complete.

Years ago the island was frequented by deer, foxes and some



other large animals, and within the last half century foxes have been known, but none of these animals are now known to live wild upon the island. At the time of the revolution it is said there were plenty of foxes and raccoons, and some opossums. Not many years after the war the last deer known to be upon the island were shot. Forty years ago the skunk abounded, and about that time a mink was caught in the act of making a raid upon a poultry yard. Wolves were also among the troublesome animals during the early years of settlement here. The records tell us that about the close of the seventeenth century the county paid a premium on all wolves that were caught. An entry before us shows that in 1698 Thomas Stillwell received fifteen shillings for a wolf and Cornelius Tysen received one pound for a wolf's head. Different bounties were offered for animals of different sex and age, as was the custom in many counties of the state. By this means those animals were soon exterminated. The mammalia now known to the island are weasels (least and common), mink, skunk, moles (common and star-nosed and mole shrew), gray and flying squirrels, chipmunk, jumping mouse, Norway rat, common, house and deer mice, muskrat, rabbit, brown, red, hoary and silver black bats.

The following list, prepared by Mr. Arthur Hollick and his indefatigable associates, represents that part of the bird fauna of Staten Island which is known to have nested here within the past fifteen years. Several species not in the list would no doubt have been included had it been compiled a quarter of a century ago, and there is a probability that continued careful search will reveal others. The value of this list will be appreciated by those who have noticed the gradual disappearance of some of the island species, and the scarcity of others that were formerly abundant. We omit the scientific names from this list.

Robin, wood thrush, brown thrush, mocking bird, cat bird, blue bird, tufted titmouse, chickadee, house wren, long-billed marsh wren, short-billed marsh wren, summer yellow bird, oven bird, Maryland yellow-throat, yellow-breasted chat, scarlet tanager, barn swallow, white-bellied swallow, eave swallow, cedar bird or wax-wing, red-eyed hang bird, white-eyed hang bird, yellow bird, sea-side finch, sharp-tailed finch, swamp sparrow, song sparrow, chippy, field sparrow, English sparrow, indigo bird, cardinal grosbeak, chewink, bob-o-link, cow bird,



red-winged blackbird, meadow lark, orchard oriole, Baltimore oriole, crow blackbird, common crow, fish crow, blue jay, king bird, great crested flycatcher, phoebe bird, peewee, least flycatcher, night hawk, chimney swallow, ruby-throated hummingbird, belted kingfisher, black-billed cuckoo, yellow-billed cuckoo, downy woodpecker, red-headed woodpecker or high-older, golden-winged wood screech owl, sharp-shinned or pigeon hawk, red-shouldered hawk, fish hawk or osprey, wild pigeon, quail, woodcock, teeter-tail or peep, shytepoke, and clapper rail or mud hen.

Coming down to the lower orders and lesser wing creatures we have the following list of butterflies which have been captured on the island. This has been kindly furnished us by Mr. William T. Davis, to whose labors in this department of natural history we are indebted for its compilation. The list though not supposed to be entirely complete comprises:

*Papilionidae*.—*Papilio Philenor*, L. *Papilio Asterias*, F. *Papilio Troilus*, L. *Papilio Turnus*, L. *Papilio Turnus*, dim. var. *Glaucus*, L. *Papilio Cresphontes*, Cram. *Pieris Protodice*, Bd-Lec. *Pieris Oleracea*, Bd. *Pieris Rapae*, L. *Colias Philodice*, Godt. *Colias Philodice*, var. *Alba*. *Terias Nicippe*, Cram. common in 1880, saw none before or since. *Terias Lisa*, Bd.

*Nymphalidae*.—*Danais Archippus*, F. *Argynnis Idalia*, Drury. *Argynnis Cybele*, F. *Argynnis Myrina*, Cram. *Argynnis Bellona*, F. *Euptoieta Claudia*, Cram. one specimen, Clove Valley, C. W. Butler. *Melitaea Phaeton*, Drury. *Phyciodes Tharos*, Drury. *Grapta Interrogationis*, F. *Grapta Interrogationis*, var. *Umbrosa*, Lintn. *Grapta Comma*, Harr. *Grapta Comma*, var. *Dryas*, Edw. *Grapta Progne*, Cram. *Grapta J Album*, Bd.; one specimen, New Dorp, Miss M. Britton. *Vanessa Antiopa*, L. *Pyrameis Atalanta*, L. *Pyrameis Huntera*, Drury. *Pyrameis Cardui*, L. *Junonia Lavinia*, Cram. *Limenitis Ursula*, F. *Limenitis Disippus*, Godt. *Neonympha Eurytris*, F. *Neonympha Canthus*, L. *Satyrus Alope*, F.

*Lycaenidae*.—*Thecla Humuli*, Harr. *Thecla Calamis*, Hüb. *Thecla Smilacis*, Bd.; C. W. Leng. *Thecla Henrici*, Gr. Rob. *Thecla Niphon*, Hüb. Watchogue. *Feniseca Tarquinius*, G. *Chrysophanus Americana*, D'Urban. *Lycaena Pseudargiolus*, Bd-Lec. *Lycaena Pseudargiolus*, var. *Violacea*, Edw. *Lycaena Pseudargiolus*, var. *Lucia*, Kirby. *Lycaena Pseudargiolus*, var. *Neglecta*, Edw. *Lycaena Comyntas*, Godt





*Hesperidae*.—*Ancyloxypha Numitor*, F. *Pamphila* Massasoit, Scud. *Pamphila* Zabulon, Bd-Lec. *Pamphila* Zabulon, dim. var. Pocohontas. *Pamphila* Sassacus, Scud. *Pamphila* Pontiac, Edw. *Pamphila* Otho, var Egeremet. *Pamphila* Peckius, Kirby. *Pamphila* Mystic, Edw. *Pamphila* Cernes, Bd-Lec. *Pamphila* Metacomet, Harr. *Pamphila* Verna, Edw. *Pyrgus Tessellata*, Scud. *Thanaos Brizo*, Bd. *Thanaos Juvenalis*, F. *Pholisora Catullus*, Cram. *Eudamus Pylades*, Scud. *Eudamus Lycidas*, Sm-Abb; one specimen, Clove Valley. *Eudamus Tityrus*, F.

Mr. Davis has also furnished us with the following list of the reptiles and batrachians of the island. In geographical distribution some of the reptiles are almost confined to the Cretaceous and those portions of the island covered by marine alluvium. *C. Pennsylvanicum* seems to be restricted to the shallow pools near the salt water. It occurs near New Dorp, Richmond Valley station and Watchogue. *Ophibolus triangulus* is a rather scarce serpent on the island. *Ranahalecina*, though found in other portions of the island, is much more common on the marsh land near Watchogue. The species of *Diemyctylus* have only been observed in the hilly districts. In 1881 the "spade foot" frog made its appearance in some numbers, but it has not since been seen. No copperheads or rattlesnakes have been found.

*Reptilia*.—*Testudinata*; *Cistudo clausa*, *Nanemys guttatus*, *Chrysemys picta*, *Malacoclemmys palustris*, *Cinosternum Pennsylvanicum*, *Chelydra serpentina*, *Chelonia mydas*: *Ophidia*: *Heterodon platyrhinus*, *Tropidonotus sipedon*, *Storeria dekayi*, *Entaenia saurita*, *E. sirtalis*, *Bascanium constrictor*, *Liopeltis vernalis*, *Diadophis punctatus*, *Ophibolus doliiatus triangulus*.

*Batrachia*.—*Anura*; *Rana halecina*, *R. palustris*, *R. clamitans*, *R. temporaria*, *Scaphiopus holbrookii*, *Hyla versicolor*, *H. pickeringii*, *Acris gryllus*, *Bufo lentiginosus*: *Urodela*; *Diemyctylus viridescens*, *D. miniatus*, *Desmognathus fusca*, *Hemidactylium scutatum*, *Plethodon erythronotus*, *P. glutinosus*, *Spelerpes bilineatus*, *S. ruber*, *Amblystoma opacum*, *A. punctatum*.

The waters about the island have from time immemorial abounded with living creatures of value to the inhabitants. To the aborigines the abundance of clams and oysters was a consideration that attracted thousands hither. Seals frequently have been seen about the bay, and whales have been known to



enter and pass through the Narrows, up the river. Van der Donck tells us that in 1647 two whales of common size swam up the river forty miles, and one of them on its return stranded about twelve miles from sea. The other he says ran farther up and grounded near the "great Chapoos falls." As late as 1841 a whale was seen sporting between the Narrows and Governor's island, and another is reported as entering the bay some five or six years later. The menhaden or moss-bunker abounded in these waters, and was formerly used in large quantities for fertilizing the soil, the fishing commencing on the south shore in June. Thirty or forty years ago these fish were sold to farmers in large quantities at 75 cents a thousand. Soon afterward the business of extracting the oil from them sprang up, and this use being more profitable the price was increased until it became about four times the one mentioned. This practically placed the fish beyond the reach of the farmer. Clams are found in large numbers along the shores of the island. The Great kills was formerly noted for these bivalves. Some peculiarities in the soft clams found at different points along the shores have been noticed by those who have studied the subject. These variations are attributed to the different conditions of the beach upon which they are found. From New Brighton to the mouth of the Narrows, where the shore is rocky, the clams are only of moderate size, the ends being often broken and the outside of the shell corrugated. On the sandy beach of the south shore, which is open to the sea, the shells are very thin and of even growth. All the lateral and transverse markings are complete, the shells often very beautiful in form and color, and here the largest specimens are found. About a half-mile southwest of the "Elm Tree Light" the shore is composed of salt meadow or peat, which is supposed to be too hard for the free development of well formed shells, hence the clams found there exhibit more deformities and are often more rounded in shape than those found elsewhere. Beyond Seguine's point, however, the shore resembles in character that of New Brighton, and the clams also correspond to those of that shore. The oyster growth and habits will be more particularly noticed in connection with that industry.

Many traces of the savage occupants have been found upon the island. These are most common along the shores from Prince's bay around to Watchogue. Shell heaps are found





that indicate that the work of wampum manufacture and the preparation of clams and oysters for food was carried on in those localities. The two most fruitful localities in affording Indian relics are perhaps Tottenville and Watchogue. Hundreds of implements have been found, some mixed up with *debris* of the shell heaps and others scattered over the fields. These implements consist of net-sinkers, hammer stones, axes, arrow-heads, mortars, pestles, beads, anvils, and others the use of which is unknown. Arrow-heads were found by the bushel, being turned up by the plow in most of the fields. Indian burying grounds have been discovered near Tottenville, and isolated remains at other points. In these interments various implements accompanied the bodies, among which were arrow-heads such as were used in war, those being distinguishable from the arrow-heads used in hunting. Nearly all the arrows found about the fields are of the latter kind. Among the objects of special interest are discoidal and shuttle shaped perforated stones, supposed by some to have been intended as ceremonial implements of some kind, and by others to have been for the practical purpose of shaping bow-strings by drawing the soft material back and forth through the small holes. The discoidal stones have the opposite flat faces either ground roughly or polished, and are of hard quartzite. The only shuttle-shaped stone found is composed of soft banded slate. As no material of this kind exists here it is supposed that this specimen had been brought from Ohio or Illinois, where similar objects had been found. Evidences of fire places have been noticed in several of the shell mounds, specimens of cracked and partly fused stone having been found. In some of the stones the surface was entirely fused into a glass-like slag. One of the most striking curiosities of this nature, however, is the stone head found near Clifton in 1884. This was unearthed by Mr. James Clark, in the latter part of February, while digging up the root of a blue huckleberry bush which he intended to use in the manufacture of rustic basket work. It lay about eighteen inches under the soil at a point two to three hundred feet east of the railroad track, and near the Fingerboard road, at the edge of a low dense swamp. In digging with a pick, that instrument struck the stone and turned it up. The material is a brown sandstone, apparently more compact than the common New Jersey sandstone, and composed almost entirely of grains of



quartz with an occasional small pebble. The head is seven inches high, four inches through the cheeks and six inches from the tip of the nose through to the back of the head, and its weight is about eight pounds. The nostrils are one and seven-eighths inches across their base and the eyes are one and a quarter inches long and five-eighths wide. They are raised in the centers and have a groove running around close to the lids. A round hole one-fifth inch deep had been drilled in the lower part of the nose, in the space between the two nostrils, evidently for the purpose of fastening an ornament, and both nostrils were hollowed out to some depth. The cheeks, in their lower part, are sunken in a very curious manner, causing the cheek bones to stand up very high. The forehead is low and retreats at an angle of sixty degrees. A trace of what had been or was to be the ear was noticeable on the right side. The back and upper parts of the head are almost entirely rough and unworked, as though the image had never been finished, or else was only a part of some larger figure. The surface is rough and slightly weathered, the cheeks, forehead and chin having single grains of sand apparently raised above the surface as if by age and exposure. The features are too well cut for a common off-hand piece of work by a stone maker. The style is not Egyptian or Eastern, so it does not appear that it could have been thrown out here by any sailor or other person who had ever brought it from across the ocean. It is said to bear some resemblance to the Mexican, and still more to the Aztec style of work. The spot where it was found is and has been within the memory of man an unfrequented wild, remote from any habitation, and the soil in which it lay is a compact sandy clay of light brown color, in which a stone like this might lie buried for centuries without much disintegration.

But we must draw this chapter of description to a close; but in doing so we cannot refrain from introducing the beautiful poem by James Burke, entitled "The Isle of the Bay," which so aptly describes the island whose history we are about to notice :

Up from the waters that come as the daughters  
Of Neptune, the lord of the wide spreading main,  
Bringing with pleasure, love, homage and treasure  
To lay on the altar of Liberty's Fane,—  
Rises serenely, resplendent and queenly,  
As far-famed Atlantis, in Hercules' day,—  
Sweet Staten Island, of valley and highland,  
So fair that we name her the Pride of the Bay !





Summer caressing, while breathing the blessing  
 A mother invokes on her daughter, a bride,  
 Her miniature mountains and silver-spring fountains  
 Are dimpled and rippled with beauty and pride.  
 Valleys are smiling with pleasures beguiling,  
 And terrace-like hills from her shores roll away :  
 Green are the meadows and cool are the shadows  
 Of grottoes and groves in our Isle of the Bay.

Winter, though bringing his terrors and flinging  
 Them down at her feet with a pitiless hand,  
 Yet is her ardor sufficient to guard her,  
 And laughter defies him on lake and on land.  
 Springtime poetic and Autumn pathetic,  
 Are seasons whose charms have a limitless sway,  
 Yet do they hasten their garments and hasten  
 To visit their homes on our Isle of the Bay !

Add to what's charming, her fishing and farming,  
 Her soil and its products both racy and rare,  
 Shore lines combining, by Nature's designing,  
 A wharfage for commerce unrivalled elsewhere ;  
 Gardens and goodlands, with wild ways and woodlands.  
 And water abundant as music in May,  
 Then Use and Beauty unite in the duty,  
 An Eden to make of our Isle of the Bay !

History rolling its gates back, and tolling  
 The echoes of ages receding from sight,  
 Figures are walking and voices are talking,  
 That show us our progress to Liberty's light :  
 First the red foe-man and next the Dutch yeoman.  
 Succeeded by Dongan's Colonial sway ;  
 Hanover's scepter then subjugate kept her  
 Till Washington rescued our Isle of the Bay !

But though her story be studded with glory,  
 And Nature hath decked her with grandeur and grace,  
 Yet are these phases less worthy of praises  
 Than this that here Love finds a fit dwelling place.  
 Refuge from dangers, both natives and strangers,  
 Black, white or red, or the sons of Cathay,  
 All here abiding, in friendship confiding,  
 Find welcome and weal in our Isle of the Bay.



### CHAPTER III.

#### THE PERIOD OF SETTLEMENT—1609 TO 1683.

Discovery.—The First Settlement and the Settlers.—Conquest by the English.

STANDING upon the soil of this beautiful island and reflecting that it has a character, a history and a name peculiar to itself, we feel a natural desire to review the scenes which broke to the view of the first visitors from the realm of civilization, and indeed to see what is possible of the condition of things that existed previous to that time. Let us imagine the wheels of time turned back two hundred and fifty years or more. Let us wipe out all the improvement which the white man has brought here and look at the land in the full possession of its aboriginal occupants. To see it as it was then we must silence the noise of the railroad train and steamboat whistles and bells, tear up the railroad track and neutralize the grade, uproot the mills and manufactories, dissolve the villages, wipe out the farm fences and obliterate all the other marks of improvement that now exist, then restore the primitive forest, the unbroken sward, and repopulate the slopes and plains, the hills and valleys with deer, foxes, raccoons, wolves, rabbits and all the multitudes of animals that once infested them. We should still see life and action. But it would be of a different sort. Instead of all this change, which we call improvement, we should see the work of Nature glorying in her freedom, untrammelled by the arts of man. We should see the son of the forest restored to his native haunts, the tangled thicket, the pebbled shore and the groves of majestic trees whose heads had bowed to the winds of centuries.

It were a useless undertaking to attempt to set forth a learned hypothesis in regard to the occupancy of this region during the ages of the world's existence which preceded its discovery and settlement by the European white man. That



history must ever remain as it has thus far, a sealed book. At the time alluded to it was occupied by Indians, but their traditions threw no light upon the darkness that enshrouded the ages which had been rolling away since the creation of the world. They were numerous, and had been more so, even to such an extent that in their traditions the blades of grass and sands of the sea-shore were used as figures to represent the magnitude of their numbers. But no memorial was left to tell us what scenes were passing here while the great events of the ancient world's history were agitating the people of the eastern hemisphere. How long had they held sway? By what race of beings had they been preceded? Was their course of development progressive or retrograde? These questions are answered only by their echoes, which the hollow darkness of uncomputed ages gives back to us.

To approach a realization of the primitive condition of things, let us indulge in an imaginative scene of that period. Suppose ourselves to be surrounded by the whispering solitude of the virgin wilderness. Along the sea-girt shore we have wandered, listening to the hoarse song of the sea; our faces have felt the burning of the glancing sunlight, and we have breathed the strong salt air as it came in upon us from beyond Sandy Hook. From the seashore coming through the interior we see no roads, no houses, no farms, but life is represented by the animals and birds that start at our approach and by the fruit and flower laden vines and shrubs that impede our movements. From a commanding hill we can see now and then a little band of Indians following some obscure trail through the valley below, as they move from place to place upon some unknown embassy of friendship or perchance of hatred.

Looking across the valley, behold! yonder an Indian huntsman has secreted himself hard by a little sheet of clear, fresh water, to watch for the deer that may come there to drink. As we look, the sharp twang of the bow and the whirr of the death-dealing arrow, and the commotion of the bushes where the game has fallen in its dying struggle tell us that he has not watched in vain.

Let us approach one of their rude settlements which is conveniently located on the shore of the beautiful bay, and taking refuge behind one of these old oaks, watch the movements of the savages before us. They know nothing of the existence of



any race of beings in the shape of men besides themselves. Their lives, their habits, their religion and language are unmixed—and shall we say uncorrupted?—by contact with the white man.

We are looking down upon a quiet Indian village in the foreground, located upon a low bluff. The bay, with its partially encircling belt of white sand, and the verdure clad hills rising from it in beautiful undulations, presents a landscape scene of surpassing loveliness. Beyond the glimmer and sheen of the nearer waters, the view takes in a glimpse of the wider expanse which loses itself in the hazy veil that obscures the distant horizon. On the placid water before us half a dozen canoes are paddling lazily about, some containing a single Indian each, others several, returning perhaps from some neighborly errand to another tribe or village, or perhaps from a hunting or fishing expedition in which they have been engaged. Yonder comes a canoe containing three half-grown boys and a quantity of long, coarse grass or rushes which they have gathered from the bog just across the cove. They are bringing them to be made into mats by that group of women who are seated on the slope just in front of us. That rude manufacture is to them one of the fine arts. But a much finer art is being practiced by that little company which you see away to the right of them, hovering about that heap of shells. They are working out from the shells, by a slow and tedious process, the details of which we are not near enough to see, those curious little beads, which when strung are called wampum and are used for ornaments as well as for money. Back on the rolling elevation to the right of us, and in rear of the little cluster of wigwams, lies their cornfield. The women have planted and cultivated it, and now the crop is almost ready to harvest. Some women are in the field looking to see if the ears are ripe enough to pull from the stalk. Here on our left two men are digging clay from the side of the very hill upon which we stand. This clay they are roughly forming into some sort of primitive pottery, which they will presently harden by baking in a hot fire, when all is ready. Seated at a little distance from them three old men sit chatting, rather socially for Indians it may be, and pecking away at stone arrow-heads, which they are forming for the use of the younger and more active men, two of whom may be seen just now returning from the woods, bringing with them the carcass of a fat





buck, which their skilled aim and the magic qualities of the old men's arrows have brought to the ground. Between the primitive pottery works and yonder clump of cedars, which crowns the projecting bluff, some men have rolled the trunk of a huge tree down from a higher hill where it grew, and are working perseveringly with fire and water and their stone axes, digging it out and shaping it for a canoe. This is primitive ship-building.

As we gaze upon the scene before us, ruminating on the contrast two hundred and seventy-five years will bring over the face of this rock-ribbed and verdure-clothed island, two half-grown Indian girls emerge from the thicket and come running down the slope to where these men are at work. With excited gestures they tell of something they have seen from the hill behind the cedars. We cannot hear their story, but from the manner of its recital and the absorbed attention the men are ready to give to it we are led to wonder what startling news the little girls have brought.

Presently the men throw down their implements and start with quick and stealthy tread, following as the girls retrace their steps, until the whole party disappears among the cedars. Some women who were at work about the shell-heap and the wigwams, having seen these movements, come over to where the old men are shaping arrow-points, and ask what strange story the little girls brought. Perhaps these old men are supposed to possess some peculiar spirit charm by which they can divine things not made known to ordinary minds. To them the women come, but they can give no solution of this mystery. Then the returned hunters come over to the spot, and the small boys come running up from the shore with the same inquiry upon their lips. The collecting group attracts the attention of the women out in the cornfield, and they leave their work to come and learn the cause of its gathering.

Presently the absent men and girls are seen emerging from the thicket and running down the hill and across the valley to where the wondering group is waiting. They are too much out of breath and overcome with excitement to say more than that they have seen a strange sight, which they fear is an omen of danger. As they recover sufficient calmness and possession of their faculties to do so they explain that away out on the great water something is moving toward them—something like a great



canoe, so large that a big tree was growing out of it, and a very great blanket was hung upon the tree so that the wind pushing against it drove the unnamed thing along. What it was they could not tell. Whether it was a great canoe with men in it, or some terrible monster of the sea, with wings, or a veritable delegation from the spirit world, good or bad, is a matter of speculation with them.

As they stand describing the strange sight to their spell-bound listeners, the apparition itself suddenly shoots past the cedar-crowned point and glides into full view, less than a mile away. Its appearance is greeted by an exclamatory chorus which we may interpret, "There it is!" and then in dead silence the group of savages contemplate the wonderful spectacle. The children cling trembling to their mothers while the squaws crouch nearer to their husbands and the warriors, and all draw instinctively together as they press around the old arrow makers, who meanwhile have thrown down their work and sit gazing in speechless wonder at the approaching nondescript. Fear seizes every heart, and the breast of even the bravest warrior is troubled with misgivings as to what this visitation may bring forth. And well they may be disturbed. It is indeed a kind Providence that hides from them their fate. If they could peer behind the veil and read the future they would know that the vision before them is the harbinger of their own dissolution; the first breath of a poisonous wind that in a few generations shall wrest from them their hunting grounds and sweep their race into the great common sepulchre upon whose portal is inscribed, "They *were*, but *are* not:" aye, the prophetic hand-writing which foretells their doom as surely as that which blazed upon the walls of Belshazzar's banquet hall.

"The Great Spirit is angry," explains one of the savages, who is the first to break the spell of silence, "and he is coming in his big, flying canoe, to look for some warrior who has done some wicked thing, or for some other man who has displeased him; but maybe he will not find the bad one here. If he wants any of us we must go. No use trying to run away from him, so we may just as well stay where we are."

Another explains: "I don't think it is the Great Spirit. That is not the way he moves. It is a great big canoe, with many men in it. They may be our enemies or they may be our



friends, or maybe they are strangers from some tribe away, far over the water."

"No," answers a third, whose clearer vision allows him to see those on board, "these are not men like us. They are pale-faced,—more than our dead fathers and brothers are. They must be spirit men. That is a more beautiful canoe than any man could make in this world. It comes from the spirit land where our fathers and chiefs have gone. Its wings are white and beautiful. They are made of the skins of animals that are hunted in that world where everything is so white and good. Maybe the spirit men in the canoe are our friends who are looking for us, to take us in the beautiful canoe to the happy hunting grounds which they have found."

But all this savage wisdom does not prevent the young warriors and hunters thinking that whatever may be the errand upon which the approaching party comes, it would be well to be ready for the worst, as least so far as the power to prepare for it is theirs. So their bows and their arrows are made ready and brought out with them, to be at hand in case of need. Some of the squaws, though they have never heard the proverb, "Distance lends enchantment," still have an instinctive conviction of its truth, and acting on that conviction are retreating beyond the corn-field as the approaching vessel nears the shore on her passage toward the Narrows, while some of the braver Indians move cautiously down the slope to get a closer view of the new revelation.

As the representatives of two distinct races of men, having nothing in language, manners nor customs alike, approach each other the new comers are able to convey to the Indians—by what sort of language who shall ever know?—the impression that their mission is a friendly one; that they intend no harm to them, but that they have brought some very useful and curious things, which by way of friendly entertainment they proceed to show them. The Indians readily see the usefulness of the metal knives, the axes, the awls, the hatchets, the blankets, the coats and various other articles which the pale-faces had brought to excite their admiration and cupidity.

The setting sun that evening closed a day never to be forgotten by those who participated in the events which we have portrayed—the day that saw the meeting of two races of men upon the soil that had been, no one knows how long, the home of one,



and was to be, no one knows how long, the home of the other. The former should decrease while the latter should increase.

From the contemplation of these important events as they may have appeared from the Indian standpoint, let us turn to consider in more explicit and definite terms the discovery of the territory by Europeans and the establishment and progress of civilization upon the soil which for unknown centuries had been the home of the untutored savage.

The bay of New York was first discovered, according to a claim (which has, however, been disputed by some) in 1524 by Giovanni da Verrazzano, the celebrated Florentine navigator. It does not appear, however, that any attempt was made by the government under which the navigator sailed to hold the territory discovered by him. Of course it naturally follows that the exploration of New York bay involved the discovery of Staten Island. But whatever may have been the facts with regard to the exploration of Verrazzano, the honors of discovery are accorded to Henry Hudson, and whatever advantages attended that discovery were husbanded by the Dutch government, under whose flag Hudson sailed.

Henry Hudson was one of those ambitious navigators who were ready to sacrifice their ease, and even their lives, in the exciting enterprise of searching for the northwest passage to the Indies. A native Englishman, the early part of the seventeenth century found him in the employ first, of the London Company, and after that company had abandoned the enterprise, then engaged with the Dutch East India Company. Under the commission of the latter he left Amsterdam in the "Half Moon," a ship of about eighty tons capacity, and on the 4th of April, 1609, sailed for the new world. He arrived on the "Banks" of Newfoundland early in July, and for two months cruised along the coast, looking for some opening that would promise to admit him to the Indian sea beyond.

How easy it is in the light of the present day to smile at the unavailing enthusiasm of Hudson and the folly of his scheme! But whatever the motives that led to it the momentous consequences of that exploration are sufficient to provoke our profoundest gratitude. After several unsuccessful attempts to find such an opening in the land as would indicate what he desired to see, he entered the Lower bay and anchored inside of Sandy Hook on the 3d day of September, 1609. Though not the first





to behold, Hudson was the first to penetrate the mysteries of the land and water which extended to an unknown distance before him. In one boat he visited "Coney Island," and sent another, containing five men, on an exploring expedition northward. These men passed through the Narrows, coasted along Staten Island, and penetrated some distance into the kills. On their return they suddenly encountered two large canoes, containing twenty-six Indians, who, in their alarm, discharged a shower of arrows at the strangers and killed one man, an Englishman, named John Coleman, by shooting him in the neck. Both parties became frightened, and pulled away from each other with all their strength. Coleman's body was taken to Sandy Hook and there interred, and the place was called "Coleman's Point."

Notwithstanding the mishap, as the death of Coleman was regarded, the natives proved to be friendly, and freely bartered with the strangers such articles as they had to dispose of, as tobacco, maize, wild fruits, etc. Hudson remained at anchor until the eleventh, when he sailed through the Narrows and anchored in the mouth of the great river which now bears his name. On the thirteenth he again weighed anchor, and proceeded to explore the beautiful stream upon whose bosom he was floating; he was eleven days in ascending as far as the site of Albany, and as many more in descending. Before starting he had had considerable intercourse with the natives, but had always prudently kept himself and his men prepared for any emergency, and though the natives frequently came on board armed they made no hostile demonstrations; Hudson, however, detained two of the Staten Island Indians as hostages, and took them with him on the voyage up the river, as far as the site of West Point, where they escaped by jumping overboard and swimming to the shore. On his way he encountered many of the Indians, who, though they manifested a friendly disposition, were nevertheless suspected of entertaining hostile intentions, and it was supposed that the dread with which they regarded the arms of their visitors alone restrained them.

On his return down the river, while lying at anchor off Stony Point, numerous canoes from both sides surrounded the ship, from one of which an Indian entered the cabin by climbing through a stern window, from which he stole several articles of clothing. As he left the ship with his plunder, the mate



detected him and shot him, killing him instantly. This was the first blood shed by the whites. When the ship's boat was sent to recover the stolen articles, one Indian, who appeared to possess more courage than his fellows, while swimming, laid hold of the boat, apparently for the purpose of overturning it, but a sailor, with a single blow of his sword, cut off his hands, and he was drowned. It was supposed that the two Staten Island savages who had escaped at West Point, on their way down the river had alarmed the several tribes so that when the ship arrived at the upper end of Manhattan Island it was met by a large fleet of canoes filled with armed savages, who discharged their arrows, but fortunately without doing any serious injury. A cannon was twice discharged at them, killing some of them and tearing their canoes to pieces, the sailors meanwhile firing at them with small arms. The result of this engagement was that nine Indians were killed, and many more wounded, while the whites sustained no injury whatever. Hudson, having spent a month in exploring the river and bay, put to sea on the 4th of October, and arrived at Dartmouth, England, on the 7th of the following November.

There is no evidence that Hudson ever circumnavigated the island, but that he satisfied himself of its insular character is evident from the name "*Staaten Eylandt*," which he gave to it.

Following this mere outline discovery, no notice was paid to Staten Island for several years, at least so far as any accounts that we have of the movements of the Dutch traders show. Some descriptions of the condition of the island may have been written at an earlier period, but the following extract from a letter written by Isaack de Rasieres to Samuel Blommaert, about the close of the year 1627 (as is supposed) contains the earliest description of this part of the country that we have by one who was an eye witness of those primitive scenes. The letter was found in the Royal Library at the Hague, and translated by Mr. J. R. Brodhead. It bears no date, but was probably written after De Rasieres' return to Holland. A copy may be found in *N. Y. Hist. Soc. Collections*, II. Series, Vol. 2, page 343.

"On the 27th of July, Anno 1626, by the help of God, I arrived with the ship *The Arms of Amsterdam*, before the Bay of the great *Mauritse River*,\* sailing into it about a musket shot

\* The North river—so called after Prince Maurice of Orange.



from Godyn's Point\* into Coeuraet's Bay† (where the greatest depth is, because from the East point there stretches out a sand bank on which there is only from 9 to 14 feet water), then sailed on Northeast and North Northeast, to about half way from the low sand bank called Godyn's Point, to the Hamel's-Hoofden,‡ the mouth of the river, where we found at half ebb, 16, 17, 18 feet water, and which is a sandy reef a musket shot broad, stretching for the most part Northeast and Southwest, quite across, according to my opinion, and to have been formed there by the stream, inasmuch as the flood runs in to the bay from the sea East Southeast; the depth at Godyn's Point is caused by the ebb flowing out along there with such rapidity. Between the Hamel's-Hoofden the width is about a caunon's shot of 2,000 [yards]. The depth 10, 11, 12 fathoms. They are tolerably high points, and well wooded. The West point is an island, inhabited by from eighty to ninety savages, who support themselves by planting maize. The East point is a very large island, full 24 miles§ long, stretching East by South and East Southeast along the sea-coast from the river to the East end of the Fisher's Point.||

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

“The Hamel's-Hoofden being passed, there is about a mile width in the river, and also on the West side there is an inlet, where another river runs up about 20 miles to the North-North-East, emptying into the Mauritse River in the highlands, thus making the North-West land opposite to the Manhatas, an island 18 miles long. It is inhabited by the old Manhatans; they are about 200 to 300 strong, women and men, under different chiefs whom they call ‘Sackimas.’ This island is more mountainous than the other land on the South east side of the river, which opposite to the Manhatas is about a mile and a half in breadth. At the side of the before-mentioned little river which we call Achter Col¶ there is a great deal of waste, reedy land; the rest

\* Sandy Hook—so named after Samuel Godyn, one of the directors of the West India Company at Amsterdam.

† The Lower bay of New York—also called Port May or Godyn's bay.

‡ Hamel's Hoofden—the Narrows, between Staten and Long Islands. These “Hoofden,” or headlands, were named after Hendrick Hamel, one of the directors of the West India Company.

§ Dutch miles—a Dutch mile is equal to about three English miles.

|| Visscher's Hoeck—Montauk Point.

¶ The Kills.



is full of trees, and in some places there is good soil, where the savages plant their maize, upon which they live as well as by hunting. The other side of the small river, according to conjecture, is about 20 to 30 miles broad to the South river, in the neighborhood of the Sancicans, as well as I have been able to make it out from the mouths of the savages; but as they live in a state of constant enmity with those tribes the passage is seldom made; wherefore I have not been able to learn the exact distance; so that when we wish to send letters overland they (the natives) take them way across the bay and have the letters carried forward by others unless one amongst them may happen to be on friendly terms and who might venture to go there."

The Indians dwelling on Staten Island at the time of its discovery were the Raritans, a branch of the great nation of Delawares or Leni-Lenapes. From indications found in various localities, such as large collections of shells and bones, it is evident that they dwelt on or near the shores of the island, where fish, scale and shell, were easily obtained; this is also confirmed by the fact that their burial places have been found in the vicinity of those places, neither of these indications of human occupancy having been found in the interior. Stone hatchets and stone arrow-heads, and springs rudely built up with stone walls, have been found at no great distance from the shores; one of the latter may still be seen a short distance northeast of the Fresh pond, or Silver lake, in Castleton, and is known by the name of the Logan spring.

The interior of the island was their hunting ground, where deer, bears and other animals of the chase were found. The shores also afforded an abundant supply of water fowls, and thus, all their resources considered, the Indians were well supplied by nature with the necessities of life. In addition to these, they had wild berries and fruits, maize, of which it is said they cultivated large quantities, beans, tobacco, and other articles of their own cultivation. The proximity of the island to the mainland enabled them to extend their hunting expeditions indefinitely. The wild animals which were found on the neighboring continent were also found here, but they, as well as their human contemporaries, have gradually retired or perished as civilization advanced.

It is supposed that the Indians of Staten Island, in common





with those of the neighborhood, were subject to the Mohawks, and stood in constant and mortal fear of them. Their clothing was the skins of the beaver, fox, and other animals, and consisted of but little more than a covering of the thighs and loins. Their food was maize or Indian corn, fish, birds and wild game. Their weapons were bows and arrows, the latter sharpened with flint stones or the bones of fishes. Boats were made from a single piece of wood, hollowed out by fire. Some led a wandering life, while others had fixed abodes built with rafters, and oven-formed, covered with the bark of trees, and large enough to accommodate several families. A few mats, wooden dishes, stone hatchets and smoking tubes composed their scanty furniture. The fire was kindled in the middle of these dwellings, from one end to the other, and the smoke let out at an opening in the crown of the roof. On hunting and fishing expeditions they erected temporary huts in the same fashion.

All the agriculture was done by the women, who of course knew nothing of plowing or spading the soil, nor the culture of wheat, oats, barley or rye. Their universal grain was maize, or turkey corn, of which they made bread and "sapraen" or mush. They also cultivated beans, pumpkins, squashes and tobacco. The old men made wooden bowls, ladles and baskets.

Their hatches were made of stone, in shape like rude wedges, about a half foot long, and broad in proportion. A notch was made around the thick end, which received the two parts of a stick split at one end which formed the handle. The jaws of the handle were then firmly bound with thongs to the hatchet and the implement was ready for use. Sometimes these hatchets were not handled at all, but were simply held in the hands when being used. Their chief use was to make good fields for maize plantations, by girdling the trees and thus clearing the ground by taking advantage of the natural course of decay and time in removing the wood growth.

When the Indians wished to fell a thick, strong tree they employed fire. This was done by heaping a great quantity of wood about the trunk of the tree, and burning it, continuing this process until the trunk was burned through and the tree fell. But to prevent the fire consuming the part which they wished to save they made a swab with which, fastened to the end of a pole, they kept applying water to the trunk a little above the fire. When it was desired to hollow out a log they applied fire



in a similar way and kept wetting the part that was to be preserved. After thus burning and charring the inside of the trunk they finished it by chipping and scraping the burnt parts with their stone hatchets, flints and sharp shells. Canoes were often made thirty to forty feet long.

Instead of knives they used little sharp pieces of flint or quartz or some other hard kind of stone, and these were sometimes substituted by sharp shells or pieces of bone which they had sharpened. At the end of their arrows they fastened narrow angular or pointed pieces of stone. These points were commonly pieces of flint or quartz, but sometimes other hard kinds of stone were used, and again the bones of animals or the claws of birds were sometimes used.

They had stone pestles, about a foot long and as thick as a man's arm. These were made of a black sort of stone, and were used for pounding their maize, which was an important article of their food. Sometimes they used wooden pestles. For mortars they hollowed out the stumps or butts of trees. The old boilers or kettles of the Indians were either made of clay or of different kinds of stone. The former were made of a dark clay mixed with grains of white sand or quartz, and burnt in the fire. Many of these kettles had holes in opposite sides of the upper edge, through which a stick was passed, and by this means the kettle was held over the fire to boil. These kettles seldom had feet, and were never glazed either inside or outside.

Their tobacco pipes were made of clay, or pot-stone or serpentine stone. The clay pipes were shaped like our common pipes of that material, though they were much coarser and more rudely formed. The tube was thick and short, often not more than an inch but sometimes a finger in length. In color they were like our pipes that have been long in use. The celebrated "pipe of peace" was made of a fine red stone, not found in this part of the country, and it was probably almost unknown to the Indians of Staten Island.

For fishing they used hooks made of bone or the claws of birds. Fire was kindled by rubbing one end of a hard piece of wood against another dry one till after a time the friction became so great that the wood began to smoke and finally to burn.

The Indians in personal character and appearance were



healthy, strong, robust and well proportioned. In social life they were polygamous, their chiefs having several wives. They were faithful, however, to the marriage relations, and the women often preferred death to dishonor. Wassenaer of Amsterdam, who wrote in 1621-33, says that the Indian women "are the most experienced star-gazers; there is scarcely one of them but can name all the stars—their rising and setting, the position of the *Arclos*, that is, the wagon, is as well known to them as to us, and they name them by other names." All the natives paid particular attention to the sun, moon and stars in connection with their seasons. The first moon following the one at the end of February was greatly honored, and as she rose they had a festival, feasting on fish and wild game, and drinking with it clear, fresh water. The Indian year now commenced, and this moon was hailed as the harbinger of spring, and the women began to prepare for planting. At the arrival of the new August moon another feast was celebrated for the coming harvest.

The Indians seemed to have no knowledge of God or religion. Some of them paid homage to the Devil or evil spirits, but not with so much ceremony as the native Africans do. They believed in good and evil spirits, and their spiritual affairs were entrusted to Kitzinacka, a sort of weather priest. He visited the sick and dying, and sat beside them bawling, crying and roaring like a demon. He was a kind of Capuchin, with no abode of his own, lodged where he pleased, and never ate food prepared by a married woman. It must be cooked by a maiden or an old woman.

Wampum was the universal money among the Indians. It was made of the thick and blue part of sea clam-shells and oyster shells. The thin covering of this part being split off a hole was drilled through it and then the outward shape given to it by means of a stone upon which it was rubbed or ground. The form was sometimes eight sided, but generally round or nearly so, and in size resembling the cylindrical glass beads sometimes known as "bugles." The beads were usually about an eighth of an inch in diameter. When finished they were strung upon cords of some kind, and these strings of wampum were measured by the foot, yard or fathom. In their manufacture from six to ten feet in length were considered a day's work. It was of two kinds, white



and purple or black. The latter was wrought out of the mussel shells. With the Dutch governors six beads of the white or four of the purple were equal in value to one penny. This currency was used by the Europeans for many years after their settlement here. The Indians made belts of wampum by weaving the strings into widths of several inches and they were two feet or more in length. It was sometimes called seewan. Both the Dutch and English recognized it as currency for a long time. In 1683 the schoolmaster at Flatbush, L. I., was paid his salary in wheat at "wampum value." Among other fees he received for supplying water for baptisms twelve styvers, in wampum, for every baptism. In 1693 the ferriage for passengers from New York to Brooklyn was eight styvers in wampum each. It was also used for ornamenting the person and as an emblem of agreement in treaties. The belt of wampum removed the remembrance of injuries and bloodshed. On Staten Island, Long Island and the neighboring shores of the mainland are found numerous beds or heaps of clam shells broken into very small pieces. These were without doubt the scenes of this manufacture. When we remember that this article was the currency of all the tribes even away inland, and that the materials of which it was made were only found on the sea coast, we can see what an important and advantageous position the Indians of this locality occupied.

In their burials the dead were placed in the earth without a coffin, but with all their costly garments of skins, in a sitting posture, upon a stone or block of wood. Near the body were also arranged a pot, kettle, platter and spoon, with some wampum and provisions, for their invisible journey to the Spirit Land. Over the grave was heaped a pile of wood, stone or earth. A few of these spots of sepulture have been found in different parts of the island. One of these was on or near the old Pelton place at West New Brighton. Here have been found, in years long gone by, various trinkets—a copper box, copper earrings and a glass pipe. The last was found in the mouth of an Indian skeleton.

Tradition says that the point of the island now occupied by Tottenville was once a favorite burial spot with the Indians. The remains of several have been exhumed there within a few years past. One was found while digging a cistern on the premises of Mr. Appleby, and several others were dug up on





the premises of Joel Cole. The peculiar beauty of the site, it is said, made it attractive to the aborigines for sepulture, affording as it did an uninterrupted view of the rising and the setting sun. The site was also a favorite meeting place during the periods of their spirit worshipping. Friendly tribes from Long Island, Manhattan island and the Jersey shore were wont to join the natives here, on their festive occasions, when doubtless the surrounding forests and the neighboring hills resounded with the untutored songs of thousands of the children of nature's wilds.

The treatment of the Indians by the Dutch explorers and the Dutch government was not such as to inspire friendly returns from the savages. The disgraceful barbarities with which the Indians were often treated are too common matters of history to need repetition here. In consequence of the savage passions which this treatment aroused Staten Island was repeatedly scourged by the spirit of retaliation naturally evinced by the sons of the forest. Of some of the more notable demonstrations of hostility between the two races we shall speak.

In the spring of 1640 some parties, on their way from New Amsterdam to South River, Delaware, stopped at Staten Island to take in water, and while there stole some hogs from the settlers on de Vries' bouwerries. The Indians residing on the Raritan, and who had manifested a hostile disposition, were at once charged with the theft, which was regarded as a serious offense, and Governor Kieft to punish them sent a company of about seventy men, under command of his secretary, Van Tienhoven, with instructions to invade the Indian country, capture as many of the natives as they could, and destroy their crops. When the party reached their destination they became insubordinate, and the secretary lost control over them. They declared their intention to kill every Indian they could find, and though reminded that such a course would be going beyond their instructions, they persisted, and the secretary, seeing that expostulation was in vain, left them to execute their wanton determination. Several of the unfortunate savages were killed, and the chief's brother was barbarously murdered after he had been made a prisoner by one of the party named Govert Loockermans. Their crops were destroyed, their wigwams burned, and other outrages perpetrated. Having satiated their fiendish spirit, the Dutchmen retired, leaving one of their number,



whose name was Ross, supercargo of the ship "Neptune," dead on the field.

The Indians, goaded to desperation, not only by the unjustifiable destruction of their crops, and slaughter of their brethren, but by a long continued course of frauds practised upon them by unscrupulous men, who first intoxicated and then cheated them in bargaining with them, resolved upon revenge. One of their first acts was to invade Staten Island, where in 1641 they attacked the settlement that de Vries had begun, and killed four men and burned two of his houses.

Not long before, a young Indian, smarting under a sense of wrong, vowed to kill the first Dutchman who crossed his path, and he kept his vow. Governor Kieft, forgetting that he himself was the instigator of all these outrages, announced his intention of taking summary vengeance upon the savages. It was in vain that the prominent men of the colony counselled moderation—in vain that they represented to him that his course would be adding fuel to the fire—he replied to all their remonstrances that the law was "blood for blood," and he meant to have it; he recognized the applicability of the law to the whites, but not to the savages. His anger was chiefly directed to the Raritans, and he entered into an agreement with some of the river Indians to assist him in annihilating that tribe, and to excite their bloodthirsty dispositions, he offered ten fathoms of wampum for the head of a Raritan, and twenty fathoms for the head of every Indian engaged in the murders upon Staten Island. At this time he built a small redoubt upon the island.

In the meanwhile, the Indians upon Long Island began to manifest a hostile disposition, and Kieft found himself involved in new troubles. It was evident from some of his measures that he began to regret his precipitancy, and if nothing else had occurred to irritate him anew, he might have consented to forget the past, and to "bury the hatchet;" but just at this juncture some traders happened to meet an Indian of the Hackensack tribe, who was clothed in a dress of valuable beaver skins, whom they made drunk, and then robbed. On recovering his senses, the savage vowed to kill the first Swannakin (white man) whom he should meet. He did that, and more; an Englishman who was a servant of de Vries on Staten Island, was met by him and killed, and shortly after a man named Van Vorst, while engaged in repairing a house in the vicinity of



Newark bay, met the same fate. Apprehensive of further trouble, a deputation of chiefs of some of the neighboring tribes, waited upon the director, whom they found greatly excited, and not disposed to reason with them. He informed them that the only way to keep peace was to surrender the murderer. "We cannot do that," they replied, "because he has fled, and is out of our reach." They offered to make compensation for the crime, according to the customs of their people; nothing, however, could propitiate Kieft but the possession of the murderer. The Indians represented to him, that it was not they who committed the murders, but the white men's rum; "keep that away from the Indians," said they, "and there will be no more murders;" but Kieft was inexorable—he was resolved upon war, unless they surrendered the murderer, who was as far out of their reach as out of his.

New troubles now arose with the Long Island Indians. Thus far they had remained quiet, but the Dutch, with an infatuation utterly unaccountable, suffered no opportunities to pass to excite them to deeds of violence. Matters were becoming worse daily, and an outbreak of Indian fury could not have been suppressed much longer, when, through the unremitting assiduity of the philanthropic Roger Williams, a meeting between Kieft and several Indian sachems took place at Rockaway on the 25th of March, and a reconciliation was effected.

The peace thus concluded was of short duration. The Indians continued to commit depredations upon the property of the settlers, and especially was this the case upon Staten Island. Many of them still held their residence there, and could not resist the temptation to appropriate the products of the agricultural skill and labor of their white neighbors, which were so much superior in quantity, quality and variety to their own. Remonstrances had proved ineffectual, and it became necessary to adopt severer measures. In addition to this, the Raritans, who were the offending tribe, had interrupted the communication between the two shores of the river at New Amsterdam, and it had become perilous to attempt to land on the west shore.

In the winter of 1642-3 two armed parties from Fort Amsterdam attacked the Indians at Corlear's Hook and Pavonia (Hoboken) slaying thirty at the former place and eighty at the latter. This outrage led to almost fatal consequences. From



the Raritan to the Connecticut the war-whoop was heard, and eleven tribes declared open war against the Dutch. All settlers they met with were murdered,—men, women and children—dwellings were burnt, cattle killed and crops destroyed. In the spring of 1643 peace was secured, but it was unsatisfactory to the river Indians, and the war-fires were again kindled. Pavonia, and the greater part of Manhattan and Long islands, were in the hands of the savage foes, now embracing seven tribes and numbering 1,500 warriors. To oppose this uncivilized body the Dutch forces amounted to not more than 200 to 300 settlers and between 50 and 60 badly munitioned soldiers. All the “Bouweries,” or plantations at Pavonia, and with one exception only on the Long island shore, were destroyed. An early chronicle says: “Staten Island, where Cornelius Melyn established himself (1643) is unattacked yet, but stands expecting an assault every hour.”

Early in 1644 an expedition against the Staten Island Indians was organized. It consisted of forty burghers under Joachim Pietersen Kuyter; thirty-five Englishmen under Lieutenant Baxter, and several soldiers from the fort under Sergeant Peter Cock, and the whole being under command of Counsellor La Montange. They embarked after dark, and at a late hour landed upon the island. They marched all night, and when the morning dawned, had arrived at the place where they expected to find the Indians, but there were none there. Secretly as the whole enterprise had been conducted, the savages had discovered it and escaped. The troops, after burning the village, returned, taking with them over five hundred schepels of corn.\*

To the honor of a few, however, be it said the Dutch were not unanimous in their inhuman hostility to the Indians. Prominent among the few who comprehended the situation, and understood what course of policy would have been best for the colony, was the minister, Dominie Bogardus, and de Vries, the patroon of part of Staten Island. They were strongly opposed to the course pursued by the directors in their dealings with the Indians, and the event showed the wisdom of the policy of forbearance and conciliation which they recommended. So persistent were they in pressing their views upon the authorities, that they excited their anger, and were charged with a

\*A schepel was almost three pecks.





design of ingratiating themselves into the favor of the Indians for selfish purposes, and to the prejudice of the interests of the colony at large. The Indians understood these men and recognized them as friends, and when, in one of the raids they made upon the settlers on the island, they had killed some of de Vries' cattle without knowing to whom they belonged, they expressed their regret for the act, calling him the friend of the Indians. At another time, when a difficulty had occurred with some of the Long Island Indians, and Kieft found himself in a dilemma, he was very desirous of making peace with them, but he could find no ambassador who was willing to trust himself in their power, until de Vries offered to visit them for the purpose. He was hospitably received, and when his mission was explained to them, and they were requested to visit the director at the fort in New Amsterdam, they refused to go until he had pledged himself for their safety.

On what part of the island the Indian village, which has been spoken of as having been burned by the Dutch expedition in 1644, was located is entirely a matter of conjecture. There is a tradition that an Indian village once stood on the shore of the Lower bay not far from the present Annadale, but no remains have been found to establish its site. From numerous relics and Indian remains that have been found about Tottenville, Kreischerville and Watchogue, it is possible that the village may have been at one or other of those places.

During the year 1655, another and more serious calamity befell Staten Island than any which had preceded it. Hendrick Van Dyck, former attorney-general at New Amsterdam, on rising one morning, discovered a squaw in his garden stealing peaches; in a moment of anger he seized his gun and shot her, killing her instantly. Of this rash act, little, if any, notice was taken by the authorities, but the Indians did not overlook it; immediate measures were taken by them to avenge the outrage. Several of the neighboring tribes united, and early on the morning of the 15th of September sixty-four canoes, containing nineteen hundred savages, some of whom were Mohicans, and others from Esopus, Hackingsack, Tappaan and Stamford, suddenly appeared before New Amsterdam. They landed and dispersed through the various streets, while many of the people were still asleep. They broke into several houses on pretense of looking for "Indians from the North," but in reality to



avenge the death of the squaw that Van Dyke had shot. As soon as they were discovered, an alarm was sounded. The officers of the colony and city, and many of the principal inhabitants, assembled, and the leaders of the savages were requested to meet with them, which they did; they accounted for their sudden appearance under pretext of searching for some hostile northern Indians, who, they pretended they had been informed, were either in the city or its vicinity. After much persuasion they were induced to promise to leave Manhattan island at sunset, but when evening came they were still there, and manifested no disposition to leave. They became unruly and the people became excited, and violent acts were committed by both parties; Van Dyck, the thoughtless author of the trouble, paid the penalty of his rashness by being killed with an arrow, and Paulus Leinderstein Van Der Grist, one of the city officials, was killed by a blow with an axe. The soldiers in the fort and the city guard were called out, and attacked the invaders, driving them back to their canoes. Crossing the river, the savages attacked the settlements there, and killed or captured most of the people. Thence they went to Staten Island, which at that time had a population of ninety souls and eleven flourishing bouweries; twenty-two of the people were killed, and all of the remainder who did not escape were carried away captive, and the bouweries were desolated. The Indians continued their ravages three days, during which time they killed one hundred whites, took one hundred and fifty prisoners, and ruined three hundred more in their estates. Alarm spread throughout the entire region, and there was no safety anywhere, for the hostile Indians were prowling about by day and by night, even upon Manhattan island, where they killed all who came within their reach. Stuyvesant employed every means in his power for the protection of the settlement at New Amsterdam and the neighboring settlements, and after awhile the ransom of all or nearly all the prisoners taken by the Indians was accomplished, the Indians receiving ammunition in return for the captives.

This bloody siege has been known as the "Peach war," from the circumstance of its origin as already narrated. The island was now almost entirely depopulated, and the settlement had to be recommenced from the beginning. Adrian Post, the overseer for Baron Van de Cappelán was one of the sixty-seven who escaped massacre and was taken captive. He affirms, with



reference to Staten Island, "that all the dwelling-houses were burned in the known conflict with the savages in 1655, and that no other effects were then left than a few beasts, which he, after his imprisonment by them, collected together, and of which the greatest part died, while the few remaining were sold by him for the maintenance of his wife and children." In relation to the affair we also quote from the reminiscences of Altie Widelar, wife of Thomas Burbank, who "settled at V. Duses:" "She sd. there was 2 or 3 houses at Old Town and at Carlsneck & the Indians run off the Island and murderd. at Old Town all Except a little girl who run into the woods—the indian put on her fathers Cloths and Decoyd. the Girl supposing it to be her father her they savd.—The Indians Came principally from Bergain."

The Indians of Staten Island after the coming of the whites rapidly diminished in numbers. As they gave up their lands to the white settlers they moved back into the country. But in reality comparatively few of them moved in that way. Most of them ended their days either by wars among themselves or were destroyed by small-pox, a disease with which they are said to have been unacquainted before their commerce with Europeans, but which afterward made sad havoc with them. And in addition to these causes a writer during the middle of the last century said, "But Brandy has killed most of the Indians. This liquor was likewise entirely unknown to them before the Europeans came hither; but after they had tasted it they could never get enough of it. A man can hardly have a greater desire of a thing than the Indians have of brandy. I have heard them say that to die by drinking brandy was a desirable and honorable death; and indeed 'tis no very uncommon thing to kill themselves by drinking this liquor to excess."

The last of the old Staten Island Indians were "Sam" and "Hannah," and their daughter "Nance." The old couple lived at Fresh kill near the Seaman farm, and upon it they used to depredate for timber of which they made baskets, for this was their occupation. They were very old during the first quarter of this century. They sold their baskets for rum, and then they would quarrel. Hannah finally disappeared, and no one knew what had become of her. It was supposed that Sam had killed her, for he always flew into a rage whenever any one



asked him where she was. After the death of one or both of her parents it is supposed that Nance left the island.

The first idea of value that was conceived by the Dutch in view of the newly discovered regions here was not associated with any design of forming settlements here. The climate of Holland and other countries of Europe, rendered furs indispensable to their inhabitants; hitherto these had been obtained chiefly from Russia, and at great expense. The Dutch had discovered that there were furs in the countries newly discovered, which were easily procurable in exchange for articles of extremely trifling value; the temptation to engage in a traffic so exceedingly profitable, was too strong to be resisted by a people so prompt to promote their own interests. Accordingly, in 1611, a vessel was dispatched to the Mannhattans as an experiment, and so successful was the venture, that a spirit of commercial enterprise was at once awakened. Two more vessels, the "Little Fox" and the "Little Crane," were licensed, and under the pretense of looking for the northwest passage, sailed direct for the newly-discovered river. This was in the spring of 1613. Having arrived, the traders erected one or two small forts for the protection of the trade on the river. The position of the island of Manhattan for commercial purposes was so favorable as to strike the Europeans at once, and the traders who had scattered in various directions made that island their head-quarters. Hendrick Cortiansen was the superintendent of the business, and with his small craft penetrated every bay or stream where Indians were to be found, in pursuit of furs.

The results of these expeditions were successful, and many others were projected, and crowned with similar success. When the intelligence of these discoveries reached the projectors of the several voyages at home, steps were immediately taken by them to secure to themselves the benefits of their enterprise and perseverance. All the country lying between the 40th and 45th degree of north latitude was called "New Netherland." Exclusive privileges to trade to these countries for a limited period were given to them. A trading house was at once erected on an island in the Hudson, near the present site of Albany, and the country on both sides of the river thoroughly explored in quest of furs; and by the time of the expiration of the grant, which was at the close of 1617, some of the merchants engaged in the trade had realized immense fortunes therefrom.





The charter having expired, the trade of New Netherland was thrown open, and adventurers from all parts of the fatherland eagerly enlisted therein; the former traders, however, held on to the advantages they had gained by their prior occupancy.

Different commercial associations were formed, whose several interests began to interfere with each other, and all contention and disputes were at last adjusted by the consolidation of all interests in the organization and charter of the "Dutch West India Company."

The powers and privileges with which this company was invested were not confined to the narrow limits of the New Netherlands; they embraced the whole range of the American coast, from the Horn to the Arctic sea, and on the west coast of Africa from the Hope to the Tropic of Cancer, not previously occupied by other nations. On the American coast settlements had been made by the French at Canada, by the English at Virginia, and by the Spaniards at Florida. The preparations made by the directors of the newly chartered company to improve the privileges granted to them, attracted, in England, the attention of the government, and a strong remonstrance was sent to Holland, insisting that all the territory claimed by the Dutch was embraced in the charter of Virginia, and therefore was under the jurisdiction of England. The matter was from time to time brought before the authorities of both countries, and the discussion protracted by the Dutch for the purpose of gaining time, that the preparations of the new company might be completed.

Thus it will be seen that the first Europeans who visited this part of the continent came for the purpose of trading, not of settling permanently; but having become favorably impressed with the soil and climate of the country, they began to entertain the idea of making it the place of their future abode, and to devote to agriculture that part of the season when furs were not obtainable. The country was organized into a province, a few settlers were sent out, and a form of government was established, with Peter Minuit at its head as director; this was in the year 1624. In the same year, and probably in the same ship with Minuit, a number of Walloons arrived and settled on Staten Island; this is the first settlement on the island of which we have any knowledge. These people came from the



country bordering on the river Scheldt and Flanders; they professed the reformed religion, and spoke the old French, or Gallic language; they were good soldiers, and had done efficient service in the thirty years' war. Two years before their arrival here, they had applied to Sir Dudley Carleton for permission to emigrate to some part of Virginia, upon condition that they might build a town of their own, and be governed by officers chosen by and amongst themselves. This application was referred to the Virginia company, and met with a favorable response so far as the mere settlement was concerned, but the privilege to elect their own officers was too long a step toward popular freedom, and could not be conceded; the permission to settle upon the company's land was fettered with so many conditions affecting their civil and religious liberty that they declined to entertain it, and turned their attention to the New Netherlands, where so many arbitrary conditions were not insisted on. On their arrival here they appear to have abandoned the plan of settling in a colony or single community, and separated, going in different directions, a few families taking up their abode on Staten Island. It is supposed that among these was a family by the name of Rapelje, among whom was one George Jansen de Rapelje. Surrounded by the savages and separated from their friends at Manhattan, they did not long remain here. Yielding to the necessities of their condition, lacking both food and clothing, they returned to Rapsie, the southern extremity of Manhattan island, where they found not much relief but were subjected with the other colonists to extremes of privation and suffering. But relief soon after came by the arrival of a ship from the mother country. The Rapelje family soon after removed to Wallabout, on Long Island, and are recorded as the first European settlers upon that island. Their child Sarah has down to the present time borne the honor of having been the first child of European parentage born in the colony. Her birth is dated June 9th, 1625, and though some have claimed that it took place while the family were upon Staten Island, the facts indicate more strongly that the honor belongs to Long Island. She lived to be the wife of two husbands and the mother of twelve children, from whom has descended a large and highly respectable lineage.

For many years the traffic with the Indians for peltries had been exceedingly profitable, and large fortunes had been



secured by many of the traders, but in the course of time, as the articles of the Indian's traffic became scarcer, and the value of the Dutch commodities depreciated in consequence of their abundance, the trade gradually decreased, until at length the cost of sustaining the colony was greater than its revenues, and the West India company found itself rapidly descending to the verge of bankruptcy.

The first great landed proprietors in New Netherland were called "patroons;" they were Samuel Godyn, Samuel Bloemart, Killian Van Rensselaer and Michael Pauw. The two first named settled in Delaware. Van Rensselaer obtained a patent for a large tract on the Hudson in the vicinity of Albany and Troy, and Pauw became the proprietor of all the country extending from Hoboken southward along the bay and Staten Island sound, including Staten Island; this grant was made to him by the directors in 1630. At the same time the country was purchased from the natives for "certain cargoes or parcels of goods," and called Pavonia. The name of this proprietor still attaches to a part of his possessions in the locality known as Communipaw. It is to be mentioned to the credit of the company, that they made it a condition in the patents which they granted, that the recipients should extinguish the Indian title by direct purchase, and this was exacted in every instance. By some it is claimed that the director general and council had purchased the island of the Indians in 1626, but what the authority is for the statement we do not know. The consideration paid to the natives was not money, which would have been useless to them, but cloths of various kinds, culinary utensils, ornaments, etc., but not fire arms.

The value of the articles paid for the fee of the island varied at different times, for the Indians sold it repeatedly. Pauw's acquisition was not of much benefit to him; it is not known that he made any effort to colonize it, or that he ever cleared a rood of it, for very soon after acquiring it, difficulties arose between him and the directors, and he disposed of his territorial rights on the island and on the continent to his associate directors for the sum of 26,000 guilders. He was a man of consequence in his own country; he was one of the lord directors of the company, and among their names we find his set down as the Lord of Achtenhoven.

In 1636, David Pietersen de Vries obtained a grant for a



part of the island, and began to make settlements on it, but the precise locality is not known; it is supposed, however, to have been at or near Old Town (Oude Dorp). The dwellings of the settlers, on their arrival, were generally constructed as speedily as possible, that their families might be sheltered. Excavations for this purpose were generally made in the side of a hill, or other convenient spot, and lined and roofed with rude planks, split out of the trees; sometimes the roofs were covered with several layers of bark; these were only meant for temporary dwelling places, until better ones could be provided.

The date of the grant which had been obtained by de Vries from Wouter Van Twiller was August 13, 1636, and de Vries set sail for Holland two days afterward for the purpose of gathering a colony to come and occupy the land. He returned with his settlers about the end of the year 1638. This was the third time de Vries had sailed across the ocean to the New Netherlands, and when the ship neared the entrance at Sandy Hook he was called upon to pilot her in, as the following extracts from his journal will show:

“Sept. 25, 1638. On board the ship of the West India Company, sailed from Holland.

“Dec. 26. Got sight of Sandy Hook. The captain \* \* \* at the request of the passengers, who all had their homes in the New-Netherlands, solicited me to pilot the ship in, which I did, and anchored the same evening before Staten Island, which was my property, and put my people on shore.”

Other memoranda made by de Vries at different dates tell in his own language something of his connection with the island. Under date of August 13, 1636, he says: “I requested Wouter Van Twiller to put Staten Island down in my name, intending to form a colony there, which was granted.” Under date of January 5, 1639, he writes: “Sent my people to Staten Island, to commence the colony and buildings.” But his possession of the island was disturbed as we see by this entry of August 20, 1641: “Arrived, the ship Eyckenboom, and had on board a person named Malyn, who said he was the owner of Staten Island, that it was given to him and to Mr. Van Der Horst by the directors of the company. I could not believe this, having left the country in 1638 to take possession of this island, and in that time have settled there. I could not think





that the directors of the company would act in this way, it being granted by the sixth article, and we being the first occupants and of course it could not be taken from us."

The two following entries give us de Vries' view of the Indian massacre of 1641. September 1st of that year he writes: "My people were murdered on Staten Island by the Indians of Raritan. They told an Indian who was assisting my people that we should now come to fight for the killing of the men as we formerly had done for the hogs, with the stealing of which they were wrongfully accused. It was done by the servants of the company, then going to the South river, who landed first at Staten Island to take in wood and water, when they stole the hogs and the blame was laid on the innocent Indians, who tho' cunning enough, will do no harm if no harm is done to them. And so my colony of Staten Island was smothered in its birth by the management of Governor Kieft, who wanted to avenge the wrongs of his people on the Indians." On the day following, that is, September 2, 1641, we have this entry: "An Indian chief belonging to the Tankitekes, called Pacliam, came to the fort in much triumph, with the hand of a dead man hanging on a stick, saying it was the hand of the chief who had killed our people at Staten Island, who had avenged the wrongs of the Swannekins, whose friend he was."

De Vries is said to have been a literary man, and was the author of a historical work. There is no evidence that he resided upon the island himself. The settlers introduced by him, however, prospered for a time, until, as we have already seen, their bouweries or farms were desolated by the savages. DeVries remained in the colony for several years, and for some time thereafter maintained his hold on the "bouwerie" on Staten Island, but the relations existing between the Dutch and the Indians were not favorable to the growth of a settlement here, and though we have evidence to support the above statement in the fact that de Vries' bouwerie was excepted from the grant to Melyn, and also the fact that an Englishman residing here in the service of de Vries, was killed in 1642, yet it is probable that he soon afterward abandoned the attempt to maintain a settlement here.

The third attempt to found a settlement on Staten Island was made by a Dutch merchant by the name of Cornelis Melyn. He came from Antwerp, and his first visit was made here in



1639. July 3, 1640, he obtained an order from the directors in Holland, authorizing him to take possession of Staten Island and erect it into a "Colonie." But on his passage hither, in February, 1641, the vessel in which he sailed was captured by the "Dunkirkers," and he thus lost all he had on board, and was glad to reach his native shores in safety. He was obliged then to apply to the directors for a passage to the New Netherlands, which he obtained, and again embarked, with his family and some goods for trade with the Indians, to the value of about 1,000 guilders. This voyage was made on board the ship "Eyckenboom" (meaning "oak tree"), and he arrived at New Amsterdam August 20, 1641. He received letters patent from the directors, bearing date June 19th, 1642, for the whole of Staten Island (excepting the bouwerie of Capt. de Vries), and constituting him patroon of the island, investing him at the same time with all the powers, jurisdiction and pre-eminences of that privileged order.

During the administration of Kieft, Melyn, the patroon of Staten Island, lived in a state of unremitting hostility with him. Having adopted, in a great measure, the policy of de Vries in the treatment of the Indians, though not as successfully, he found himself in almost constant collision with Kieft, who was prompt to notice and avenge every act of the savages which he could torture into a hostile demonstration.

Kieft continued to reside at New Amsterdam for a short time after he had been superseded, and Melyn improved the opportunity to prefer charges against him. Stuyvesant, though on the whole disposed to deal justly with all men, would brook no direct attack upon the dignity of the directorship, either in his own person or in that of his predecessor, and this was the light in which he chose to regard Melyn's complaint, so when these charges were preferred they were met by counter-charges from the ex-director, among which was one that Melyn had said he could get no justice from Kieft. However true the assertion may have been in its application to Kieft, it proved quite true in application to Stuyvesant, for after a long investigation, the attorney-general expressed an opinion that both Melyn and Kuyter, who had also been implicated in the charges, ought to suffer death. The director, however, knowing that his public acts were likely to be reviewed, was disposed to deal more leniently with them; he therefore, with the consent of the



majority of the council, condemned Melyn to a banishment of seven years and a fine of three hundred guilders and Kuyter to three years' banishment and a fine of one hundred and fifty guilders.

In accordance with this sentence, the defendants were sent to Holland.\* The attention of the government was immediately called to the manner in which justice was administered in the colony, by an appeal which the banished patroon and his associates took on their arrival. An elaborate investigation followed, and the sentence was reversed; the director was also censured, and required to return home and answer for his arbitrary conduct. Melyn, armed with the necessary documents, returned triumphantly to New Amsterdam, and had the satisfaction of serving them upon the director in person. These proceedings on the part of the patroon were far from mollifying the director; and, as he had proved to be a dangerous man to meddle with arbitrarily, he gratified his animosity by acts of hostility to Melyn's family. Jacob Loper, the son-in-law of the patroon, who had served under Stuyvesant in the West Indies, applied for permission to make a trading voyage to South River, Delaware, but it was peremptorily refused.

Stuyvesant's representatives appeared before the tribunal which had cited him, to answer for and defend the acts of their principal. The opinion of the court was that Melyn had been seriously injured in his property and person for no other crime or cause than presuming to differ in opinion with the director. In the meantime the trade of the colony had become less remunerative, and the government, both at home and in the colony, had become involved in complications with other powers to such an extent as to divert attention from Melyn's cause, and it was left for the time in abeyance.

\*The ex-director, Kieft, was also a passenger on the same vessel. In regard to their treatment and the events of the voyage we may quote another chronicle:—"They were brought on board like criminals, and torn away from their goods, their wives, and their children. The Princess (the name of the ship) was to carry the director and these two faithful patriots away from New Netherland; but, coming into the wrong channel, it struck upon a rock and was wrecked. And now, this wicked Kieft, seeing death before his eyes, sighed deeply, and, turning to these two (Melyn and Kuyter), said: 'Friends, I have been unjust towards you; can you forgive me?' Towards morning the ship was broken to pieces. Among those drowned were Melyn's son, the minister, Bogardus, Kieft, Captain John De Vries, and a great number of other persons. Much treasure was lost, as Kieft was on his return with a fortune of four hundred thousand guilders—160,000 dollars."



Melyn's appeal seems to have at last gained the reversal of the sentence which had been imposed upon him by Stuyvesant. But notwithstanding this, the persecutions of the governor seem to have continued with unabated zeal. In the spring of 1650 Melyn associated with himself Baron Van Cappelán, a man of wealth, who immediately fitted out a ship called the "New Netherland's Fortune," with a cargo and some twenty colonists for Staten Island. The ship was commanded by Capt. Adrian Post.

The passage was one of extraordinary length and the sea was unusually boisterous, and they were obliged to put into Rhode Island for supplies. They did not reach New Amsterdam until the following winter. Making this stop at Rhode Island the occasion for another persecution, Stuyvesant seized the ship under the pretext that it belonged to Melyn, and caused it and the cargo to be sold. It was purchased by Thomas Willet, who sent it on a voyage to Virginia, and thence to Holland, where Van Cappelán replevined it, and after a protracted law suit, the West India company was obliged to pay a large sum in consequence of the illegal act of its representative and servant in New Netherland.

The harassed patroon immediately withdrew to his "colonie" on Staten Island, from whence he was summoned by Stuyvesant to appear, and answer to new charges which had been preferred against him. This summons he positively refused to obey, and a lot of land, with a house on it, in New Amsterdam, belonging to him, was declared confiscated, and accordingly was sold. Melyn now fortified himself on the island and established a manorial court.

Among the charges preferred against Melyn were the following: that he had distributed arms amongst the Indians, and had endeavored to excite hostile feelings toward the director among some of the river tribes. When he left Holland the patroon had taken the precaution of furnishing himself with a "safe conduct," as it was called, which was a sort of protection against further aggressions on the part of Stuyvesant; to this, however, he paid little regard when he had the patroon in his power; but now that he had proved contumacious by refusing to appear, and putting himself into his enemy's power, the director scarcely dared venture to arrest by force one who was





protected by a document of such authority ; he therefore affected to be alarmed for his own personal safety, and applied to the council for protection, who granted him a body guard of four halbidiers, to attend him whenever he went abroad. Van Dincklagen, the vice-director, had been instrumental in assisting both Van Cappelan and Melyn in promoting the successful settlement of Staten Island ; he therefore fell under the displeasure of the director, who ordered him to resign, or the council to expel him from their body, but he refused to resign, and defied the council to expel him, as they had no more power to deprive him of his office than the director himself, as both held their commissions from the same authority at home. Nevertheless, he was arrested and imprisoned in the guard-house, and the counsel who had defended him was forbidden to practice his profession in the colony. After the lapse of several days the vice-director was liberated, and immediately took up his residence with Melyn on Staten Island.

These settlements were probably located on the east side of the island, between the Narrows and the locality known as Old Town, or "Oude Dorp," as it was called. But all traces of these settlements have long since vanished, and no records are left to tell us of their locality. Though the site was well selected in some respects—sheltered by hills on the north, accessible by water, convenient for fishing, and comprising both upland and meadow—it was early abandoned for other situations. An atmosphere of misfortune, too, seemed to hover over it. The first plantation, by de Vries, had been destroyed ; Melyn, the patroon, and all connected with him seemed to be the especial objects of the governor's animosity, and we now come to the period when the settlement is again wiped out by the bloody Indian raid of 1655, an account of which has already been given. At that time Baron Van Cappelan's colonists numbered "ninety souls in eleven bouweries," all of whom were killed or dispersed. The island was now depopulated, and the settlement had to be re-commenced. Van Cappelan did what he could to induce the affrighted people to return to their desolated homes, and sent out new colonists. These efforts were made by Van Dincklagen, his agent. To avert the probability of another attack, he negotiated another purchase of the island from the Indians, and made a treaty with them. This was done



on the 10th of July, 1657.\* These proceedings on his part were disapproved by the directors of the company at home, who insisted that all settlers' titles should come through them. Stuyvesant was, therefore, directed to declare the late purchase void, to secure the Indian title for the company, and then to convey to Van Cappelán what land he might require.

In 1661 Melyn returned to Holland, having, in consideration of fifteen hundred guilders (six hundred dollars), conveyed all his interest in Staten Island to the West India Company. The deed was dated June 14, 1659. He was also granted an amnesty for all offenses which had been charged upon him by either Stuyvesant or his predecessor. Van Cappelán being dead, the company also purchased all the title he had to any part of the island during his life time, and thus became the possessors of the whole of it.

About this time Johannes de Decker, who first came to New Amsterdam in 1655, acquired title to one hundred and twenty acres of land on Staten Island. He was a young man of good reputation, and for a time occupied important official trusts. By what steps he obtained possession of the land mentioned, or where it was located, we have not learned. By some disagreement with Stuyvesant he fell into discord with that turbulent official and was dispossessed and banished. The sentence was, however, in all probability reversed, since he was back in the colony again at the time of the conquest of 1664. Among the last of the Dutch patents was one granted to him for this land, dated January 15, 1664. During the administration of Nicolls, however, his Dutch patriotism made him offensive to the English government, and he was again banished from the province.

Some time after the peace of Breda, he applied to the Duke of York for a redress of his grievances and a restitution of his property. This application the duke referred to Lovelace, with

\*Dunlap has set forth that the island was purchased of the Indians in 1651, by Augustine Herman, but we fail to find authority sufficient to sustain the assertion. A purchase was made of the Indians December 6th of that year, by "Augustine Heermans," acting for Cornelis van Wreckhoven, a Schepen of Utrecht, which covered a large tract lying between the Arthur kill and the Raritan river; and from the incidental mention of Staten Island in giving the boundaries the idea may have been gained that the conveyance included this island. But as Melyn was in undisputed possession here at the time, had been for several years previous, and continued to be for several years after, it is fair to presume that no such purchase of the Indians was made or intended to be made.



instructions to do in the premises what might be just and proper; the result was that de Becker was restored to all his rights and privileges, and he retired to private life on his farm on Staten Island.

He was the progenitor of a numerous family now residing on the island, by the name of Decker, and further notice of him will be found in connection with the history of that family.

Soon after the sale of the island by Melyn and Van Cappellan's heirs to the West India company, the latter made grants of land to several French Waldenses, and a still greater number of Huguenots from Rochelle, the descendants of whom are still residents here, and in a few instances still occupying the identical grants made to their ancestors. About a dozen families commenced a settlement south of the Narrows. In 1663 they built a block-house as a defense against the Indians, and placed within it a garrison of ten men, and armed it with two small cannons. At the request of these settlers, Dominie Drisius, of New Amsterdam, visited them every two months and preached to them in French, performing also the other functions of his calling. Rev. Samuel Drisius was sent to America by the Classis of Amsterdam, in 1654, at the request of the people, who desired a minister who could preach to them either in Dutch or French, which he was able to do. On his arrival at New Amsterdam he was at once installed as the colleague of the Rev. Johannes Megapolensis, who had resided in the country since 1642. Drisius continued to officiate at New Amsterdam and on Staten Island until 1671. From about 1660 his visits to the island were more frequent, being made once each month.

It would be pleasant could we bring out a fuller picture of the times in which these interesting people made their homes here, but the data is very meagre. Their memory is by many fondly cherished, and by others, some of whom live nearest the scenes of their conflicts with the wilderness, sadly neglected. In the shadow of the court house at Richmond, within a neglected enclosure stands a tombstone bearing the following inscription:

SUSANNAH VAN PELT  
was  
The Grand Daughter of  
Jacob Rezean, Sen'r



and the last of five generations  
interred in this burying ground.

They were Huguenots  
who left France when  
persecuted for their religion ;  
settled in this neighborhood ;  
they selected this spot  
for their last resting place  
on earth.

Sacred be their dust.  
Susannah van Pelt  
reached the advanced age  
of 99 years, 5 months, 25 days.

This monument is erected by her only surviving relative.

We come now to one of the important landmarks in the history of New York and as a consequence in the history of Staten Island. The year 1664 was the commencement of a new era, and one which was to give to the settlement here a better chance for life and a more favorable atmosphere for growth.

The English claimed to have discovered, through their representative, Sebastian Cabot, as early as 1497, the coast of North America. Their claim extended from thirty to fifty-eight degrees north latitude. Voyages were made to different parts of the coast by English navigators before the year 1606. On the 12th of March, 1664, Charles II. of England, by virtue of the claim just stated, made a grant of land to his brother James, Duke of York, which included within its liberal boundaries the territory then occupied by the Dutch at New Amsterdam and vicinity, of which Staten Island formed a part.

The duke immediately fitted out an expedition to take possession of the field covered by this patent. Richard Nicolls was commissioned deputy governor of this colony, and his associates in the government were Robert Carr, George Cartwright and Samuel Maverick. Four ships composed the fleet, and they together carried nearly one hundred guns and some six hundred men. The fleet arrived in New York bay in August of the same year, and Colonel Nicolls sent a demand to Governor Stuyvesant for the surrender of the fort and the government. The latter at first stoutly refused to comply with the demand, but after a few days spent in consultation with the burgo-masters and people of the city, and finding the latter strongly





in favor of such a course, he was forced to yield to the popular sentiment, and with much reluctance agreed to a surrender. This was accomplished on the 26th of August, and the sceptre of New Netherlands passed from the wooden-legged warrior to the representatives of the Duke of York.

It is worthy of remark that when the English fleet arrived in the bay the first Dutch property seized by them was on Staten Island, where the block house was taken and occupied.

Stuyvesant appointed six commissioners, among whom was Dom. Megapolensis and Johannes de Decker, to meet a like number on the part of the English, to arrange the terms of the capitulation. These were just and reasonable, under the circumstances; no change was to be made in the condition of the people but all were to be permitted to enjoy their property and their religion to the fullest extent. As the individual rights and privileges of no one were to be molested, the people submitted to a change of rulers, not only with a good grace, but many with satisfaction, as it released them from the overbearing and arbitrary tyranny of the director.

Though de Decker had been one of the commissioners who agreed to and signed the articles of surrender, yet, when the English began to change the names of places, and appoint new officers in place of those who had become obnoxious to them; in short, when everything began to assume an English aspect, his patriotism began to revolt, and he endeavored in some instances to oppose the work of reform which the conquerors had initiated. This brought him to the notice of Nicolls, who, to rid himself of a troublesome subject, ordered him to leave the colony within ten days. In the course of a few months everything became quiet, and the people seemed to be content with the new order of things. Unappropriated lands now began to be parcelled out to English proprietors, by English authority. Staten island, already settled by the Dutch and French, was now to receive acquisition of another nationality. Capt. James Bollen received a grant of land on the island; the country between the Raritan river and Newark bay was bought anew from the savages, and settled by people from Long Island, chiefly along Achter Cull, and four families from Jamaica began the settlement of Elizabethtown. Besides Captain Bollen, Captain William Hill, Lieutenant Humphrey Fox and one Coleman, all officers of the fleet, received grants of land on Staten Island,



but as the vessels to which they were attached were no longer needed, and were sent back to England, they had little or no opportunity of enjoying their acquisitions.

The government of New Netherland, under the original Dutch settlers, was committed to the director and his council, which at first consisted of five members. This council had supreme executive and legislative authority in the whole colony. It had also the power to try all civil and criminal cases, and all prosecutions before it were conducted by a "Schout Fiscaal," whose duties were similar to those of a sheriff and district attorney of the present day. He had the power to arrest all persons, but not without a complaint previously made to him, unless he caught an offender *in flagrante delictu*. It was his duty to examine into the merits of every case, and lay them before the court, without favor to either party; he was also to report to the directors in Holland the nature of every case prosecuted by him, and the judgment therein. In addition to the duties above enumerated, it devolved upon him to examine the papers of all vessels arriving or departing; to superintend the lading and discharging of cargoes, and to prevent smuggling. He had a right to attend the meetings of the council, and give his opinion when asked, but not to vote on any question.

Several of the patroons claimed in a great measure to be independent of the director and his council, and organized courts and appointed magistrates for their own territories, as did the patroons of Rensselaerwyck and Staten Island, but they were at constant variance with the authorities at New Amsterdam.

It is true that all who felt themselves aggrieved by the judgment of the director and his council, had a chartered right to appeal to the XIX at home—that is, the West India Company—but the directors of New Netherland generally played the despot during the brief terms of their authority, and if any suitor manifested an intention to appeal, he was at once charged with a contempt of the supreme power in the colony and most severely punished, unless he contrived to keep out of the director's reach until his case had been heard and decided in Holland, as in the instance of Melyn, the patroon of Staten Island, who appears to have been a thorn in the sides of both Kieft and Stuyvesant.

The religion recognized by the government of the province



was that of the Reformed Dutch church, or the Church of Holland, and though other sects were regarded with a certain degree of suspicion, they were tolerated so long as they did not interfere with the privileges of others.

When Stuyvesant was compelled by the popular clamor to surrender the country to the English, he stipulated for the preservation and continuance of all the political and religious rights and privileges of the people as then enjoyed, allegiance alone excepted, which was conceded by Nicolls.

After the conquest, this stipulation was generally held inviolate, but the civil institutions of the country were modified to make them accord with English ideas of government.

There are instances on record of persecution for opinion's sake on religious subjects under the Dutch, but all such matters were at once rectified when brought to the notice of the home government. This continued to be the practice of the English government also.

Staten Island, Long Island and Westchester were now united in a political division, called Yorkshire, and this was sub-divided into three parts called "Ridings." These were respectively known as the East, West, and North ridings. The West riding was composed of Staten Island, together with the towns now of Kings county and Newtown, on Long Island. The term "Riding" is a corruption of the word "Trithing," the name of a division of Yorkshire in England, after which this American "Yorkshire" seems to have been fashioned. The ridings were established principally for the accommodation of courts and convenience in apportioning taxes.

Under the duke's government each town had a justice of the peace, who was appointed by the governor; and at first eight, but afterward four overseers and a constable, who were elected by the people. Three officers were charged with the duty of assessing taxes, holding town courts, and regulating such matters of minor importance as should not otherwise be provided for by the laws or orders of the governor. The jurisdiction of the town court was limited to cases not exceeding five pounds in value.

A court of sessions, composed of the justices of the peace, was established in each riding. This court was held twice each year, and was competent to decide all criminal cases, and all civil ones where the amount of difference exceeded five pounds.



Judgments rendered in this court for sums under twenty pounds were final, but in cases exceeding that amount an appeal to the court of assize was allowed. Criminal cases involving capital punishment required the unanimous concurrence of twelve jurors, but all other cases were decided by the majority of seven jurors. The high sheriff, members of the council, and the secretary of the colony were authorized to sit with the justices in this court.

The court of assize was held once a year, in the city of New York. It was composed of the governor, his council, and an indefinite number of the justices. It entertained appeals from the inferior courts, and had original jurisdiction in cases where the demand exceeded twenty pounds. The governor appointed a high sheriff for the "shire," and a deputy sheriff for each riding. This court was the nominal head of the government—legislative as well as judicial. It was, however, in reality the governor's cloak, under cover of which he issued whatever regulations his judgment or fancy dictated. All its members held their positions during his pleasure, and were virtually obliged to sanction his views and second his opinions. Many of the laws, amendments and orders enacted through the name of this court were arbitrary, obnoxious and oppressive to the people. Petitions from the people for redress of their grievances had but little if any effect in the desired direction.

The early governors imposed duties on imported and exported goods, disposed of the public lands, and levied taxes on the people, for the support of the government. The finances of the colony were under their control, in common with every other department, and this power over the treasury was doubtless often used for their own individual benefit.

In the orders made at the general court of assize, from the 6th to the 13th of October, 1675, the following appears :

"That by reason of the Separacon by water, Staten Island shall have Jurisdiction of it Self and to have noe further dependance on the Courts of Long Island nor on their Militia." From this time forward the island has been an independent judicial district, and the first record, which soon after began to be kept, is still in existence in the office of the county clerk ; it is a small square volume, bound in vellum, and besides many quaint records of "sewts," contains the descriptions of the ear-marks on domestic animals, to distinguish the ownership,





as the animals were allowed to run at large through the woods and unappropriated lands.

Among some of these early court records we find the following:

Jacob Jeyoung (Guyon) Ptf. In A Action of the Caus  
Isaac See (?) Deft } At A Court held on Staten Island  
By the Constable and oversears of the seam on this present  
Munday Being the 7 day of febraery 1680 wharas the caus depending  
Between the Ptf and deft hath Bin heard the Court  
ordereth deft to Cleer his flax forthwith and his Corn out of  
the Barn within ten days from the deat hearof and to clear up  
his other A Counts at the next Court.

A A Court held on Staton Island By the Constabl and over-  
sears of the Seam on this present Munday Being the 5 day of  
September 1680 Sarah whittman Ptf William Britton Deft. in  
A Action of the Case to the valew of £4. 10s. 6d. The Caus  
depending Betwixt the Ptf and Deft hath Bin heard and for  
want of farther proof the Caus is Referred till the next Court.  
Sarah Whittman Ptf  
William Briten Deft

At A Court held on Staton Island by the Constabl and over-  
sears of the seam on this present Munday Being the 3 day of  
october 1680 the Court ordereth that the Deft shall seat (set) up  
and geett (get!) forty panell of soefisient (sufficient) fence for the  
yous (use) of Sarah whitman at or Be foor the first of november  
next in sewing (ensuing) with Cost of sewt.

The regulation of the sale of intoxicating liquors received the  
early attention of the government, and the following rates were  
established throughout the province, which "tapsters" were  
allowed to charge: French wines, 1s. 3d. per quart; Fayal wines  
and St. George's, 1s. 6d.; Madeira wines and Portaport, 1s.  
10d.; Canaries and Malaga, 2s. per quart; brandy, 6d. per gill;  
rum, 3d per gill; syder, 4d. per quart; double beere, 3d. per  
quart; meals at wine-houses, 1s.; at beere-houses, 8d.; lodgings  
at wine-houses, 4d. per night; at beere-houses, 3d.

In 1668, Nicolls, by his own request, was relieved of the  
government of the province, and was succeeded by Colonel  
Francis Lovelace. Thomas Lovelace, whose official signature is  
appended to so many of the old documents connected with the  
conveyance of property on Staten Island, and otherwise, and  
who at one time was sheriff of the county, was a brother to the



governor, and a member of his council ; there was also another brother, named Dudley, likewise a member of the council. The record of the administration of this governor contains many acts of arbitrary ruling and disregard of the rights of the common people. His theory of the proper way to hold a people in submission appears in a letter written by himself to a friend, to have been by imposing "such taxes on them as may not give them liberty to entertain any other thoughts but how to discharge them."

Governor Lovelace, it is said, owned a plantation on Staten Island, on which he built a mill for grinding cereals. One of the prominent acts of his administration was the re-purchase and final extinction of the Indian claim to the island. This was consummated on the 13th of April, 1670. This act has been termed "the most memorable" of his administration, and the island was described as "the most commodiousest seate and richestland" in America. The year previous, the principal sachem had confirmed the former bargains made with the English, but several other inferior sachems now presented their claims, insisting that they were the owners. To quiet them, a new bargain was made ; they executed another deed and possession was given by "turf and twigg." This was the last sale made by the Indians. They reserved two sorts of wood, however, and within the memory of the people now living, small parties of Indians, at long intervals have visited the island, and exercised their reserved right of cutting such wood as they required for the purpose of making baskets.

The original Indian deed is still in existence. Its preamble cites that it was made "between Francis Lovelace, Governor-General under James, Duke of York and Albany, etc., and the Indians Aquepo, Warrines, Minqua, Sachemack, Permantowes, Qurvequeen, Wewaneca, Oneck and Mataris, on behalf of themselves, as the true owners and lawful Indians, proprietors of Staten Island." The conveyance was executed by the affixing of the hands and seals of all the parties and the attesting witnesses as follows: Couns. Steenwick, Maijor Tho. Lovelace, C. V. Reinjven, Oloff Steven V. Cortland, Allard Anthony, Johannes Vamburgh, Gerrit Van Tright, J. Bedlow, Warn Wessols, Constapel, William Nicolls, Humph'y Davenport, Cornelis Bedloo, Nicholas Antony.

The Indians were to have the privilege of remaining until the



following May, when they were to surrender the island to such persons as the governor should appoint to receive it. This was accordingly done on the first day of May, Thomas Lovelace and Matthias Nicolls having been deputed by the governor to receive the transfer of possession from the Indians.

The conveyance also contained the following two paragraphs which are of sufficient interest to warrant copying :

“The payment agreed upon for ye purchase of Staten Island, conveyed this day by ye Indian Sachems, propriet’s is (vizt.): 1, Foure hundred Fathoms of Wampum; 2, Thirty Match Boots; 3, Eight Coates of Durens, made up; 4, Thirty Shirts; 5, Thirty Kettles; 6, Twenty Gunnes; 7, A Firkin of Powder; 8, Sixty Barres of Lead; 9, Thirty Axes; 10, Thirty Howes; 11, Fifty Knives.”

“It was further covenanted that two or three of the said Sachems, their heirs or successors, or persons employed by them, should once in every year, the first day of May, after their surrender, repair to the fort, and acknowledge their sale to the Governor, and continue in mutual friendship.”

The latter paragraph appears as an endorsed memorandum, with the signature of Francis Lovelace attached to it.

Several young Indians were not present at the time the above conveyance was made, accordingly, in order to secure their firm understanding and approval it was again delivered on the 25th of April, and in their presence. They made their marks upon it as witnesses. The names of those who thus subscribed were—“Pewowahone, about 5 yeares old, a boy; Pokoques, about 8 yeares old, a girle; Shirjairneho, about 12 yeares old, a girle; Kanarekante, about 12 yeares old, a girle; Mahquadus, about 15 yeares old, a young man; Ashehanewes, about 20 yeares old, a young man.”

This was the final sale of the island by the Indians, and we have no knowledge of any claim ever being made by them to its soil from that time forward to the present. It has already been said that the Indians were always ready to sell the island. In 1636 they sold it to Michael Pauw; shortly after they sold a part to David Pietersen de Vries; in 1641 to Cornelis Melyn; in 1657 to Baron Van Cappelán, and in 1670 to Governor Lovelace. To this last sale they were obliged to adhere; there was probably more ceremony about it, which rendered the transaction more impressive. In delivering possession, they presented



a sod and a shrub or branch of every kind of tree which grew upon the island, except the ash and elder (some say ash and hickory).

The administration of Governor Lovelace was brought to an unexpected end by the surrender of the colony to its former masters, the Dutch. Rumors of anticipated troubles in Europe reached America, and Lovelace immediately began to make preparations for the worst, so far as his means permitted; he strengthened the defenses of the fort, organized several military companies in the metropolis, and other places in the province, repaired arms and laid in a large quantity of ammunition and other warlike stores. In April, 1672, England and France declared war against Holland; in Europe, the war was chiefly naval, and the English and French fleets suffered severely at the hands of De Ruyter and Tromp. On the 7th day of August, 1673, a Dutch fleet of twenty-three vessels arrived in New York bay, and anchored under Staten Island. Soon after their arrival they made a raid upon the plantation of Lovelace, and carried off sufficient cattle and sheep to make a breakfast for the 1,600 men on board the ships of the fleet. This arrival produced the greatest consternation in the city and neighboring villages. Lovelace himself was absent from the city at the time, and when the demand was made for the surrender of the fort, it was yielded without the firing of a gun. Captain Manning, the commandant of the fort, was afterward tried for treachery and cowardice, and sentenced to have his sword broken over his head.

The conquest having been consummated Anthony Colve was immediately appointed governor of the colony, and at once commenced the work of obtaining the submission of the people to his authority, and reorganizing the government according to his own notions. But the Dutch rule was of short duration. On the 9th of February, 1674, peace was concluded between England and the states general, by the treaty of Westminster, and according to its terms the colony reverted to the English. Major Edmond Andros, of Prince Rupert's dragoon regiment, which had been disbanded, was selected as the proper person to proceed to America and receive the province from the Dutch. Armed with the proper authority from the Dutch government, which had been furnished at the request of the English king, he arrived in the Diamond frigate in October, 1674, and anchored under Staten Island. A correspondence was at once





opened between him and Colve, which resulted in a surrender of the province on the 10th day of that month.

Andros having received his commission as governor, caused the oath of allegiance to be administered to the people; the English government was once more established, and so continued for a century thereafter. The Duke of York, apprehensive that the validity of his title might be called in question, in consequence of the province having been in the possession of a foreign power, received a new patent from the king.

Andros having been recalled, Brockholst administered the government until the arrival of Colonel Thomas Dongan, who, though commissioned September 30th, 1682, did not arrive until the 25th of the following August. He was a professed papist, but is said to have been a "wiser man than a master." The people of Staten Island are more directly interested in him than in any other governor of the province under either nationality; having the whole country before him, from which to select his residence, he made choice of Staten Island, and the evidences of his residence here are still, in some measure, perceptible.

Let us pause in our narrative for a brief space, to take a view of the condition of the island at this early period. The first dwelling houses erected on the island after the removal of the Walloons to Long Island, were in the vicinity of the Narrows, or between that and Old Town, which is so called, probably, from that circumstance, and were not more than five or six in number. There was one, probably, at the extreme south end, and one or two at Fresh kill. Subsequently, in 1651, when the Waldenses arrived, and, after them, the Huguenots, the settlements at Old Town and Fresh kill received accessions. Before their arrival there were no roads, except, perhaps, foot-paths through the forest, between the two last-mentioned localities; there was no need of any, for the intercourse of the islanders was with New Amsterdam. After the settlements at Old Town and Fresh kill had received accessions, intercourse between them became more frequent, and, in due course of time, the road from the one to the other was constructed; particularly after the Waldenses had built their church at Stony Brook, and the Huguenots their at Fresh kill.

The houses were built in clusters, or hamlets, for convenience



in mutual defense and protection. Tradition says that one of the first dwellings on the island was situated on the heights at New Brighton, and was constructed of bricks imported from Holland, and occupied, for a time at least, by a prominent official of the government. If there is any truth in the tradition, the house was, probably, the residence of de Vries, who, feeling secure in the friendship of the Indians, ventured to erect his dwelling in that beautiful, but remote, locality. That the builder's confidence in the Indians was not misplaced, the same tradition further says that, in 1655, when the great Indian war broke out, and the island was nearly depopulated, this house and its occupants were spared. In the latter part of the last century, and in the beginning of the present, all the territory embraced in the first, and most of the second wards of the present village of New Brighton constituted farms owned by the families of the Van Buskirks, Crocherons and Vreelands; these farms extended from the kills one mile into the country. Abraham Crocheron, the owner of one of them, erected a grist mill in the valley east of Jersey street, relying for a supply of water on the spring now known as the Hessian spring; but this not proving sufficient, he converted his grist mill into a snuff mill, for which the supply was abundant. About the same time Captain Thomas Lawrence built a distillery on a small wharf which now forms a part of the present large New Brighton wharf. Long before this part of the island was patented to any individual, and laid out into farms, and while it was yet covered with the original forests, there was a deep ravine, extending from the spring mentioned above to the kills, into which the tide ebbed and flowed, and which, in the days of the Dutch and early English governors, afforded a place of concealment for the smugglers who infested the coast. The face of the country has now become materially changed, by cutting down the hills and filling up the valleys.

In process of time, as settlers arrived, they located along the shores, and roads became a necessity; these at first were constructed along the shores, until at length cross roads for convenience of communication between the several settlements were constructed. Some of these old roads have been closed, and the Clove road is the only original one now left.

In regard to the character of the early settlers, a writer of that century said: "As to their wealth and disposition thereto,



the Dutch are rich and sparing ; the English neither very rich, nor too great husbands ; the French are poor, and therefore forced to be penurious."

Among the earliest manufacturing enterprises in this country was the establishment of a still for the manufacture of brandy. This was founded on Staten Island by Director Kieft, in the latter part of the year 1640, and was said to be the *first* manufactory of spirituous liquors in America. William Hendrickson, a native of Holland, was the superintendent of the enterprise, on a salary of twenty-five guilders per month. It was in operation six or seven months. Its location is not known, but it is supposed to have been at "Oude Dorp." A buckskin factory, also established by Governor Kieft a little later, is supposed to have been located in the same part of the island.

We shall bring this period to a close by inserting the following extract from a manuscript found in the city of Amsterdam some years since, by Hon. H. C. Murphy. It gives an excellent picture of the time of which we are writing. On the 8th day of June, 1676, two Labadists, Jasper Dankers and Peter Shuyter, sailed from Amsterdam in a ship called the "Charles," Captain Thomas Singleton, and arrived at Sandy Hook on the 22d of September following. They say : "When we came between the Hoofden (the Highlands of Staten and Long Islands—that is, in the Narrows) we saw some Indians on the beach with a canoe, and others coming down the hill. As we tacked about, we came close to the shore, and called out to them to come on board the ship. The Indians came on board, and we looked upon them with wonder. They are dull of comprehension, slow of speech, bashful, but otherwise bold of person and red of skin. They wear something in front over the thighs, and a piece of duffels, like a blanket, around the body, and that is all the clothing they have. Their hair hangs down from their head in strings, well smeared with fat, and sometimes with quantities of little beads twisted in it, out of pride. They have thick lips and thick noses, but not fallen in like the negroes, heavy eyebrows or eyelids, brown or black eyes, thick tongues, and all of them black hair. After they had obtained some biscuit, and had amused themselves a little climbing and looking here and there, they also received some brandy to taste, of which they drank excessively, and threw it up again. They then went ashore in their canoe, and we, having a better breeze,



sailed ahead handsomely." After narrating how they landed in the city, and describing the bay and the immense quantities of fish therein, they proceeded with their journal.

"*October 9th, Monday.*—We remained at home two days, except I went out to ascertain whether there was any way of going over to Staten Island.

"*10, Tuesday.*—Finding no opportunity of going to Staten Island, we asked our old friend Symon, who had come over from Gouanes [Gowanus?], what was the best way for us to go there, when he offered us his services to take us over in his skiff, which we accepted, and at dusk accompanied him in his boat to Gouanes, where we arrived about 8 o'clock, and where he welcomed us and entertained us well.

"*11, Wednesday.*—We embarked early this morning in his boat, and rowed over to Staten Island, where we arrived about 8 o'clock. He left us there, and we went on our way. This Island is about 32 miles long, and four broad. Its sides are very irregular, with projecting points and indenting bays and creeks running deep into the country. It lies for the most part east and west, and is somewhat triangular; the most prominent point is to the west. On the east side is the narrow passage which they call the channel, by which it is separated from the high point of Long Island. On the south is the great bay, which is enclosed by Nayag, t'Conijnen island, Rentselaer's Hook, Neversink, etc. On the west is the Raritans. On the north or north-west is New Jersey, from which it is separated by a large creek or arm of the river called Kil Van Kol. The eastern part is high and steep, and has few inhabitants. It is the usual place where ships ready for sea stop to take in water. The whole south side is a large plain, with much salt meadow or marsh, and several creeks.

"The west point is flat, and on or around it is a large creek with much marsh, but to the north of this creek it is high and hilly, and beyond that it begins to be more level, but not so low as on the other side, and is well populated. On the northwest it is well provided with creeks and marshes, and the land is generally better than on the south side, although there is a good parcel of land in the middle of the latter. As it is the middle or most hilly part of the island, it is uninhabited, although the soil is better than the land around it; but in consequence of its being away from the water, and lying





so high, no one will live there, the creeks and rivers being so serviceable to them in enabling them to go to the city, and for fishing and catching oysters, and for being near the salt meadow. The woods are used for pasturing horses and cattle, for, being an island, none of them can get off. Each person has marks upon his own by which he can find them when he wants them. When the population shall increase, these places will be taken up. Game of all kinds is plenty, and twenty-five or thirty deer are sometimes seen in a herd. A boy who came in a house where we were, told us he had shot ten the last winter himself, and more than forty in his life, and in the same manner other game. We tasted here the best grapes. There are now about 100 families on the Island, of which the English constitute the least portion, and the Dutch and French divide between them about equally the greater portion. They have neither church nor minister, and live rather far from each other, and inconveniently to meet together. The English are less disposed to religion, and inquire little after it; but in case there was a minister, would contribute to his support. The French and Dutch are very desirous and eager for one, for they spoke of it wherever we went. The French are good Reformed church-men, and some of them are Walloons. The Dutch are also from different quarters. We reached the Island, as I have said, about 9 o'clock, directly opposite Gouanes, not far from the watering-place. We proceeded southwardly along the shore of the highland on the east end, where it was sometimes stony and rocky, and sometimes sandy, supplied with fine constantly flowing springs, with which at times we quenched our thirst.

“ We had now come nearly to the furthest point on the south-east, behind which I had observed several houses when we came in with the ship. We had also made inquiry as to the villages through which we would have to pass, and they told us the ‘Oude Dorp’ would be the first one we would come to; but my comrade finding the point very rocky and difficult, and believing the village was inland, and as we discovered no path to follow, we determined to clamber to the top of this steep bluff, through the bushes and thickets, which we accomplished with great difficulty and in a perspiration. We found as little of a road above as below, and nothing but woods, through which no one could see. There appeared to be a little foot-path along



the edge, which I followed a short distance to the side of the point, but my companion calling me, and saying that he thought we had certainly passed by the road to the Oude Dorp, and observing myself that the little path led down to the point, I returned again, and we followed it the other way, which led us back to the place where we started. We supposed we ought to go from the shore to find the road to Oude Dorp, and seeing here these slight tracks into the woods, we followed them as far as we could, till at last they ran to nothing else than dry leaves.

“ Having wandered an hour or more in the woods, now in a hollow and then over a hill, at one time through a swamp, at another across a brook, without finding any road or path, we entirely lost the way. We could see nothing but the sky through the thick branches of the trees over our heads, and we thought it best to break out of the woods entirely and regain the shore. I had taken an observation of the shore and point, having been able to look at the sun, which shone extraordinarily hot in the thick woods, without the least breath of air stirring. We made our way at last, as well as we could, out of the woods, and struck the shore a quarter of an hour's distance from where we began to climb up. We were rejoiced, as there was a house not far from the place where we came out. We went to it to see if we could find any one who would show us the way a little. There was no master in it, but an English woman with negroes and servants. We first asked her as to the road, and then for something to drink, and also for some one to show us the road, but she refused the last, although we were willing to pay for it; she was a cross woman. She said she had never been at the village, and her folks must work, and we would certainly have to go away as wise as we came. She said, however, we must follow the shore, as we did. We went now over the rocky point, which we were no sooner over than we saw a pretty little sand bay, and a small creek, and not far from there, cattle and houses. We also saw the point from which the little path led from the hill above, where I was when my comrade called me. We would not have had more than three hundred steps to go to have been where we now were. It was very hot, and we perspired a great deal. We went on to the little creek to sit down and rest ourselves there, and to cool our feet, and



then proceeded to the houses which constituted the Oude Dorp. It was now about two o'clock. There were seven houses, but only three in which anybody lived. The others were abandoned, and their owners gone to live on better places on the Island, because the ground around this village was worn out and barren, and also too limited for their use. We went into the first house, which was inhabited by English, and there rested ourselves and eat, and inquired further after the road; the woman was cross, and her husband not much better. We had to pay here for what we eat, which we have not done before. We paid three guilders in seewan, although we only drank water. We proceeded by a tolerable good road to Nieuwe Dorp, but as the road ran continually in the woods we got astray again in them. It was dark, and we were compelled to break our way out through the woods and thickets, and we went a great distance before we succeeded, when it was almost entirely dark. We saw a house at a distance to which we directed ourselves across the bushes; it was the first house of the Nieuwe Dorp. We found there an Englishman who could speak Dutch, and who received us very cordially into his house, where we had as good as he and his wife had. She was a Dutch woman from the Manhatans, who was glad to have us in her house.

"12th, *Thursday*.—Although we had not slept well, we had to resume our journey with the day. The man where we slept set us on the road. We had no more villages to go to, but went from one plantation to another, for the most part belonging to French, who showed us every kindness because we conversed with them in French.

"About one-third of the distance from the south side to the west end is still all woods, and is very little visired. We had to go along the shore, finding sometimes fine creeks well provided with wild turkeys, geese, snipes and wood-hens. Lying rotting on the shore were thousands of fish called marsbaucken, which are about the size of a common carp. These fish swim close together in large schools, and are pursued by other fish so that they are forced upon the shore in order to avoid the mouths of their enemies, and when the water falls they are left to die, food for the eagles and other birds of prey. Proceeding thus along, we came to the west point, where an Englishman lived alone, some distance from the road. We ate something



here, and he gave us the consolation that we would have a very bad road for two or three hours ahead, which indeed we experienced, for there was neither path nor road. He showed us as well as he could. There was a large creek to cross which ran very far into the land, and when we got on the other side of it we must, he said, go outward along the shore. After we had gone a piece of the way through the woods, we came to a valley with a brook running through it, which we took to be the creek or the end of it. We turned around it as short as we could, in order to go back again to the shore, which we reached after wandering a long time over hill and dale, when we saw the creek, which we supposed we had crossed, now just before us. We followed the side of it deep into the woods, and when we arrived at the end of it saw no path along the other side to get outwards again, but the road ran into the woods in order to cut off a point of the hills and land. We pursued this road for some time, but saw no mode of getting out, and that it led further and further from the creek. We therefore left the road, and went across through the bushes, so as to reach the shore by the nearest route according to our calculation. After continuing this course about an hour, we saw at a distance a miserably constructed tabernacle of pieces of wood covered with brush, all open in front, and where we thought there were Indians, but on coming up to it we found in it an Englishman sick, and his wife and child lying upon some bushes by a little fire. We asked him if he was sick? 'I have been sick over two months,' he replied. It made my heart sore, indeed, for I never, in all my life, saw such poverty, and that, too, in the middle of the woods and wilderness. After we had obtained some information as to the way, we went on, and had not gone far before we came to another house, and thus from one farm to another, French, Dutch, and a few English, so that we had not wandered very far out of the way. We inquired, at each house, the way to the next one. Shortly before evening we arrived at the plantation of a Frenchman, whom they called La Chaudrounier, who was formerly a soldier under the Prince of Orange, and had served in Brazil. He was so delighted, and held on to us so hard, that we remained and spent the night with him.

"13th, *Friday*.—We pursued our journey this morning from plantation to plantation, the same as yesterday, until we came to that of Pierre Gardinier, who had been in the service of the





Prince of Orange, and had known him well. He had a large family of children and grand-children. He was about seventy years of age, and was still as fresh and active as a young person. He was so glad to see strangers who conversed with him in the French language that he leaped with joy. After we had breakfasted here, they told us that we had another large creek to pass called the Fresh Kill, and then we could perhaps be set across the Kill Van Koll to the point of Mill Creek, where we might wait for a boat to convey us to the Manhatans. The road was long and difficult, and we asked for a guide, but he had no one, in consequence of several of his children being sick. At last he determined to go himself, and accordingly carried us in his canoe over to the point of Mill Creek in New Jersey, behind Kol [Achter Kol.] We learned immediately that there was a boat upon this creek loading with brick, and would leave that night for the city. After we had thanked and parted with Pierre le Gardinier, we determined to walk to Elizabethtown, a good half hour's distance inland, where the boat was. We slept there this night, and at 3 o'clock in the morning set sail."



## CHAPTER IV.

### THE COLONIAL PERIOD—1683 TO 1775.

Erection of Richmond County.—Arrival of Huguenots.—Division of Richmond into Towns.—The Claims of New Jersey.—Patents and Land Grants.—Establishment of the Colonial Government.—Administration of Justice.—The Time of the French War.—Colonial Description.—Colonial Customs.—Statistics.

IT seems convenient and appropriate in treating this subject to regard the colonial period proper as beginning with the administration of Governor Dongan, although it had in many respects begun several years before. In 1683 Colonel Thomas Dongan, having received the appointment of governor, took the position on the 27th of August. He came with instructions from the duke to call a general assembly of the people's representatives. This he did, and the first assembly of the colony of New York convened in the city on the 17th of October, 1683. This assembly adopted a "bill of rights," repealed some of the most obnoxious of the duke's laws, altered and amended others, and passed such new laws as they judged the circumstances of the colony required. During the session an act was passed abolishing the ridings, and organizing in their stead the counties, with some alterations in the constitution of the courts.

The "Act to divide this province and dependences into Shires and Counties," dated November 1, 1683, contains the following in reference to Staten Island:

"The county of Richmond to conteyne all Staten Island, Shutter's Island, and the islands of meadow on the west side thereof."

The county at this time contained some two hundred families. It was allowed two representatives in the colonial assembly, and the next year, for the first time, a county tax was imposed, amounting to fifteen pounds.

The colonial assembly met again in October, 1684. Among the acts passed at this session was one by which the court of



assize was abolished. The election of a new assembly took place in September, 1685, and in the following month it was organized. Only two or three unimportant acts of this assembly remain on record, and it is probable that whatever other acts it may have passed, if there were any, were never enforced. On the death of Charles II, the Duke of York ascended the throne of Great Britain with the title of James II. He now abolished the colonial assembly of New York, and re-established the governor as the supreme head of the colony, subject only to such instructions as the king himself might from time to time dictate.

We now come to a period in the civil and religious history of Staten Island of great and even romantic interest; the arrival of the French Protestants or Huguenots. Years before, it is true, some had emigrated with the Dutch from Holland, but now they landed on these shores in considerable numbers, bringing with them useful arts, a knowledge of gardening and husbandry, and above all, their own well known virtues, with a pure, simple, Bible faith. Many of the descendants from this noble stock now remain to honor the island of their birth with the sterling character which they have inherited from their ancestors.

Though the Protestants of France had, under the famous "Edict of Nantes," enjoyed the free exercise of their religion for a time, yet after the death of Henry the Great the merciless fires of persecution were once more kindled—the rack, the gibbet and the galley again began their sanguinary work all over the country, and with increased fury. The "Edict of Nantes" was formally revoked, when the Huguenots had now presented to their choice three things: to go to mass, sacrifice their lives and their property, or fly from their homes. Too true and independent to do otherwise they chose the latter expedient, and half a million of them left beautiful but bigotted France for foreign lands. Every Protestant kingdom in Europe received them with open arms, where they soon became the most valuable citizens, and many imitating the example of the Puritans, embarked for an asylum of safety to the new world, and to this island.

These settlers were celebrated for their industry and frugality, and commenced the cultivation of the earth. Brave and independent, they imparted the same excellent traits all around



them, and above all things else they cherished their religious duties and pious customs. It is a pleasant fact in the history of Staten Island, that the ancestors of the present population, whether from Holland, France or England, each were careful to maintain pure and evangelical principles in their families. Their churches were established here at an early period. The following record pertaining to the Huguenot church is so much of a curiosity that we take the liberty to insert it in full, as it appears on one of the earliest books of record of the county.

“This following deed of Gifte was recorded for the french Congreygashone Residing with In the Countey of Richmond on statone Island the 22 day of may Annoque dom : 1698.

“To all Christiane peopell To whome Theas present wrighting shall Come John bevealle Seanior of the Countey of Richmond and provence of new yorke weaver and hester his wife sendeth Greeting In our Lord God Eaver Lasting now know yee that wheare as Townas Ibbosone of the Countey of Richmond yeoman did by his certen wrighting or deed pole under his hand & sealle bearing date The seaventh day of february and in the third yeare of the Reign of our souvring Lord william the third by the Grace of God of England scotland france & Irland King annoque dom 169 $\frac{1}{2}$  Grant bargone sell and convay unto John belvealle of the Countey of Richmond & provence of new yorke weaver his heirs Exekitors Admsios And asignes A serten trakt or parcell of Land sittiate Lying and being on the west side of statones Island neare the fresh killes begining by the medow and strechig in to the wood by the Lyne of fransis oseltone dyrekt south three hundred Rood from thence west six degrees & northerly thirtey six Rood thence dyrekt north by the Lyne of Abraham Lacmone three hundred Rood thence East thirtey six Rood Containing In all sixty acres as by the Recited deed pole Relashone theareunto being had doth and may more fully and att Large Appeare Now Know yee that the said John belvealle of Statone Island And provence of New Yorke and hester his wife Testified by her being A party to the Ensaling and delivery of thease presents for the Reaell Loufe and Afeccone that they beare to the ministrey of Gods word and the savashone of yeare soules do firmley by theas presents firmley freeley & absolewtly Give Grante Rattifie & Confirme un to the french Congereygashone or Church upon Statones Island within the Countey of Richmond wone Arcer of





up land Itt being parte and parcell of the afore Recited Trackt or parcell of Land Containing sixtey arcers sowld by the said Townes Ibbosone un to the said John belvealle which arcer of Land being Laid out on the south & by East side of the brige halfe an acer of the fore Recited Arcer Lying on the south side the highway and the other halfe of the fore Recited arcer of Land now Given by the said John belvealle and hester his wife Lying and being on the north side the highway opesett against the other halfe arcer To have and to hold the fore Recited trackt and parcell of upland containing won arcer to the french Congreygashone now Residing with in the Countey of Richmond To Ereckt and build A Church upon the same for the ministrey of the Gospell and the maintainence of Gods holey word and ordinantsies and for noe other yowse nor purpose unto The frensh Congreygashone their heirs Exiekitors Admin<sup>rs</sup> for Eaver and the said John belvealle and hester his wife doth covinante promise and Grante to & with the overseers of the frensh Congreygashone that they the said John belvealle and hester his wife their heirs Exekitors Admin<sup>rs</sup> and asignes shall and will for Eaver warend and defend the fore said frensh Congreygashone Their heirs and sucksesors for Eaver in the quiett and peacebell poseshone of the afore Recited wone arcer of Land aforesaid against the said John belvealle and hester his wife or from any other persone or persones what soe eaver Law fulley Clayming aney Estate Right titell or interest of in or to the same. In testimony of the same wee the said John Belvealle and hester his wife have heare unto sett their hands and fixed their seales this twelfth day of Aprell and in the tenth yeare of the Reighen of our Souvring Lord williaeme The third by the Grace of God of England scotland france and Irland King defender of the faith Annoque dom: 1698.

signed saled and delivered

The marke of

In the presents of

John I B belvealle O

JACOB CORBETT

The marke of

D. LUCAS

hester J H belvealle O."

JEYN LA TOURRITTE

JOSEPH BASTIDOE

SAMUEL GRASSET "

As a meeting house was spoken of in 1695 as already existing, it must not be supposed that the acre above granted was the site of the first house of worship on the island. The site



of the acre referred to is upon the estate of Henry J. Seaman, Esq., about one mile from the village of Richmond, and near the road to Rossville which runs along the north side of the field in which the interesting spot is situated. It was described a few years since as being in the third field of the Seaman residence. The direction of the road was changed in 1831 so that it no longer serves to mark the position of the acre of upland referred to in Belville's deed. The bridge there mentioned was removed by Mr. Seaman in 1849, but another was placed by him on the same site, which was in the northwest corner of the same field, and from which the old road, after crossing the bridge, ran southeast diagonally partly across the field, and then returned joining the present road again near the northeast corner of the field. The church stood on the half-acre which lay on the south side of the highway. Some vestiges of its foundation remained till the beginning of the present century. It occupied the northern slope of the rising ground to the south of the old road, and about two hundred feet in the same direction from the present road. The dimensions of the church were about 32 by 45 feet, and the building stood due north and south. A small stone dwelling house, probably built for a parsonage, stood to the east of it. South of the church was the repository of the dead. These graves were once marked by rough stones, bearing no inscriptions, but of which as many as two hundred could at one time be counted. The only inscriptions that have been read upon stones found in this ground are those of Teunis Van Pelt, died 1765, aged 65 years; Mary, his wife, died 1762, aged 59 years; another from which the part bearing the name was broken off, but the date of which was 1784; and another bearing the initials J. L. and date 1784.

This interesting spot commands a prospect of a soft and peaceful character. From its gently swelling knoll the spires of Richmond are seen upon the right, and glimpses of the white edifices of the quiet village may be caught through the trees. Directly in front the meadow of Fresh kill spreads its level surface, backed by the woods and rising grounds of Carl's neck, while its meanderings may be traced, glistening in the sunbeams or indicated by the mast of some tiny craft, till the mountains of New Jersey bounded the scene. Such is the spot where those noble exiles, the Huguenots of Staten Island, erected the first edifice for the free and untrammelled exercise of their wor-



ship. Should pilgrims be attracted to the sacred place by this notice of it—Staten Islanders perchance, who can trace their families to this illustrious source—let them, as their footsteps press the hallowed soil, recall a Huguenot Sabbath of a century and three-quarters ago. Let imagination picture that humble house of God, rustic in its appearance but sublime in all its associations. Mark those groups of devout and honest men, of high souled women, the dark-eyed sons and daughters of France! List to the foreign accents of the preacher's voice, and as it dies away and their solemn anthem swells upon the air, then give them their meed of praise! We grudge not the Puritans their share of honor. Break relics, if you will from the rock of Plymouth, but let not the Huguenots of France, the Huguenots of Staten Island, be forgotten! By their own children, if by no others, should the great and good be remembered and revered.

But we must leave these musings and return to the thread of our narrative. In March, 1688, Richmond was divided into four towns—Castletown, Northfield, Southfield and Westfield. The town of Middletown was not organized until 1860. Before the legal division of the county into towns, it was divided into three precincts, the North, South and West: Castleton was not included in any of the precincts, but was designated "The Manor." The limits of the precincts were about the same as those of the towns as established by law on the 7th of March, 1688. Castleton derived its name from the Palmer or Dongan patent, in which the manor conveyed was called Cassiltown, corrupted into the present name, and the corruption legalized by repeated acts of the legislature; the other towns were named from their position in the county.

Great political changes were now taking place in the province of New York. The attempt of James II. to restore the Catholic church had made him odious to the British nation. In New York the citizens were mostly Protestants and bitterly opposed the Roman Catholic faith. Dongan had exhibited the greatest religious toleration, which judicious policy displeased his royal prince, and the wise and politic governor was recalled. Sir Edmund Andros having been appointed governor of all the provinces of New England received the seal of the province of New York from the retiring governor in July, 1688. Andros



appointed a deputy governor over New York in the person of Francis Nicholson.

James II did not long wear the crown. He was deposed during the same year, and deserting his own children, became a refugee in France. William, in compliance with the popular wish, was proclaimed king, and the great Protestant revolution was effected. A rumor spread in the province of New York that the friends of the deposed monarch intended to massacre the disaffected. A fierce popular excitement followed. The New Yorkers, while recognizing generally the sovereignty of William and Mary, prince and princess of Orange, a small party remained who insisted that the colonial government was not overthrown by the revolution. They contended that it still remained vested in the lieutenant-governor and his council. Nicholson was the deputy governor, and known to be an adherent of the Catholic church, with many of his friends; and this fact increased the distrust of the people. A mob paraded the streets of New York. Five militia companies, the entire force, surrounded the house of Jacob Leisler, a merchant of the city and captain of the militia, and demanded that he should seize the fort at the Battery, which was done. Nicholson, deprived of his authority, sailed for England. The distrust of the people, however, was not allayed. A rumor spread that an attack was plotted on the church in the fort, and that possession of the government was to be taken and the standard of King James set up. These rumors, however extravagant, excited a general consternation. The people of Long Island sent a large body of militia to New York "to seize the fort and to keep away French invasion and slavery."

The apprehensions of the people on Staten Island culminated in a panic. Fear reigned supreme for a while; they dared not remain at night in their own dwellings, but in the deepest recesses of the forest they constructed temporary shelters, to which they resorted after dark, that they might not be observed and their retreats discovered; they preferred to encounter the perils of the darkness and the forests rather than trust themselves to the tender mercies of their fellow men. Some took their families upon the water in boats, which they anchored a short distance from the shore, and thus passed the nights; and various other expedients were resorted to for concealment and security. Reports of various kinds were spread, which added fuel to the





flame and kept it burning for some length of time; among these were, that a number of papists who had been driven out of Boston had been received into the fort at New York and had enlisted as soldiers; that the papists on the island had secretly collected arms, which they kept concealed and ready for use at a moment's notice; that Governor Dongan's brigantine had been armed and otherwise equipped for some desperate enterprise, and the refusal of the commander of the vessel to permit it to be searched was not calculated to allay the alarm. He admitted that the vessel had been armed, but not for the purpose alleged, but, as she was bound on a voyage to Madeira, she was in danger of being attacked by the Turks, and she had been armed for the defense of her crew and cargo. However plausible this reason might have been it was not generally credited. The excitement at length subsided, and not a Protestant throat had been cut.

Tradition says that several pieces of cannon were afterward found in the cellar of the governor's mill, which it was supposed had been concealed there, to be in readiness when they might be required. This mill stood on the south side of the recently constructed public road in West Brighton, called Post avenue, which is in fact part of an old road reopened, for, prior to the construction of the causeway which now connects West New Brighton and Port Richmond, the only communication between Castleton and Northfield, near the shore, was round the head of the cove or pond now known as the mill pond.

It is not to be wondered at that the French Protestants here were most sensitive about their religious rights and safety. At this very time their brethren in France were suffering. The Indian wars had been renewed in Canada, and the French wanted to cut a path to the Atlantic ocean. This had been resolved upon—including the reduction of Albany and New York on the way. This, in the language of the French general would be "the only means of firmly establishing the religion throughout all North America." Louis issued his regal authority for the undertaking. All faithful Catholics were to remain unmolested, whilst the French refugees—particularly those of the pretended reformed religion—must be sent back to France. These cruel instructions were given, too, about four years after the memorable revocation of the "Edict of Nantes." What wonder then



that the Huguenots should be alarmed when such a direful fate seemed to menace them.

Jacob Leisler, a prominent character of that day, exercising both civil and military authority, was intrusted by the magistrates with the administration of affairs, after the departure of Nicholson, and one of his first acts was to cause William and Mary to be proclaimed in the counties of Richmond, Westchester, Queens, Kings and Ulster, and the city and county of Albany, and East Jersey; the order to Richmond was dated December 17th, 1689. On the 30th of the same month, he issued an order requiring all persons who held commissions, warrants, "or other instruments of power or command, either civil or military," derived from either Dongan or Andros, forthwith to surrender the same to a justice of the peace of the county wherein they resided, except the counties of New York and Richmond, who were to surrender at the fort in New York.

After the burning of Schenectady, and the massacre of its inhabitants by the French and Indians, in February, 1690, he issued another order to the military and civil officers of several counties, Richmond county being one of the number, that "fearing too great a correspondency hath been maintained between y<sup>e</sup> s<sup>d</sup> ffrench & disaffected P<sup>r</sup>sons among us," to secure all persons reputed papists, or who are inimical to the government, or who continue to hold any commissions from Dongan or Andros, and bring them before him.

In 1689, Leisler commissioned the following civil and military officers in Richmond county:

Ely Crossen, high sheriff.	Jaques Puillion, Captain.
Jacob Corbett, clerk.	Cornelis Corsen, do
Obadiah Holmes, justice.	Thomas Morgan, Lieutenant.
Jaques Poullion, do	John Theunis Van Pelt, do
Thomas Morgan, do	Segeer Geritsen, Ensign.
Jacob Gerritse, do	Cornelis Nevius, do
Cornelis Corsen, do	

The following persons from Staten Island were members of a company commanded by Captain Jacob Milborne, which was sent to Albany to establish Leisler's authority, the government of that city having refused to recognize it, viz.: "Jean Marlett, Francis Mauriss, Hendrick Hendricksen, Jean faefre, John Rob, John doulier and Peter Henkesson."



There is no evidence that the people of Staten Island took any decided stand with regard to Leisler's administration. Generally, they submitted quietly to the authorities placed over them. Further than commissioning some officers and issuing some general orders, he does not appear in connection with the history of the island. It must be admitted that Leisler had many friends on the island, though they were not very demonstrative. His appointments to office were usually from among its best citizens, which operated in his favor; no decided steps were taken in his behalf during his imprisonment and trial, but after his condemnation petitions for his pardon were extensively signed, which had no other effect than to bring upon the signers the displeasure of the government, who regarded the act as disloyal. Farther than the imposition of fines, which appear to have been remitted, and the brief imprisonment of a few individuals, no punishment was inflicted on the culprits.

On the 19th of March, 1691, Henry Slaughter, having been appointed governor of the colony, arrived and demanded possession of the fort and the reins of government. Leisler at first refused to give up the post, but was compelled to do so, and was afterward tried, condemned and hastily executed for high treason. His execution took place May 16, 1691.

On the 28th of April preceding, a letter was presented to the council in New York from the sheriff of Richmond county, "Giving an Account of severall Riotts and Tumults on Staten Island, and that they are subscribing of papers;" the sheriff was ordered to secure the ring-leaders that they might be prosecuted. Thomas Stillwell, the sheriff, was not dilatory in obeying the order, and arrested several of the citizens of the county, among whom were John Theunison, John Peterson and Gerard Vechten, each of whom he compelled to pay three pounds; others were obliged to execute bonds for the payment of that amount, and one refused to do either, and him he imprisoned. When information of the sheriff's proceedings reached New York, orders were sent down to have the bonds cancelled, whereupon the three individuals who had paid their money, demanded that it should be refunded; the sheriff, probably conscious that he had exceeded his powers, promised that it should be done, but delayed so long, that the aggrieved parties appealed to the council. At the same time, the same three indi-



viduals presented a complaint against the assessors, who exempted themselves and some others from the payment of the tax for "negers," and that poor people who have no "negers" must pay "as much accordingly like Them that Has many negers. Therefore your petitioners humbly crave That your Ex<sup>ly</sup> will be pleased To signify Them iff s<sup>d</sup> negers should be Excluded ffor paying Tax." What the result of these petitions was, we are not informed further than that they met with a favorable reception.

The papers which were "subscribed" were petitions in favor of the two condemned men; the people of Westchester also sent a petition for the same purpose, but the council did not recognize the right of petition in such cases; therefore some were cited to appear before that body, while others were imprisoned as promoters of "riots and disturbances."

During Dongan's administration, Leisler, having imported a cargo of wine, had refused to pay the duties thereon to Matthew Plowman, the collector of the port, because he was a papist. He was, however, compelled to do so, and ever thereafter was a bitter enemy of Plowman. During his brief arbitrary administration, to gratify his spite, he charged Plowman with being a defaulter to the government; and learning that he was the owner of a quantity of beef and pork stored at Elizabethtown, he ordered Johannes Burger, a sergeant at the fort, to proceed to Staten Island, and compel such individuals as he might require to go with him and assist in the removal of the provisions. Burger obeyed the order, and the property was brought to Leisler in New York, who sent it to Albany for the use of the soldiers he had sent to that place. After Leisler's execution, Plowman prosecuted all who were concerned in the removal of his property, to recover its value. Among the number were the following residents of Staten Island, viz., "John Jeronison, Thomas Morgan, Lawrence Johnson, John Peterson, Dereck Crews (Cruser), Chauck (Jaques) Pollion and John Bedine." These individuals, soon after the arrival of Major Richard Ingoldsby, as president of the province addressed an "humble Peticon," to him and the council, in which they admit having assisted in the removal of Plowman's property, but that they did so under compulsion, believing that they were doing a service to their Majesties; that they considered it unjust to compel them to pay for the provisions when the





whole country had the benefit of them; they therefore pray that they may be relieved from the whole responsibility, or if that may not be done, that every person engaged in the removal be compelled "to pay their equall proporceons of the same." This petition was presented by Plowman himself, who thereby recognized the justice of their cause, but what the result of the application was does not appear.

We must here suspend, for a little, the order of our narrative, to notice a matter which had its origin a few years before, and its final settlement nearly a century and a half after the time of which we are writing. We refer to the claims of New Jersey upon Staten Island.

When it was known in England that New Netherland had been reduced, and was now actually in the possession of the English, Lord William Berkley and Sir George Carteret, two of the royal favorites, induced the Duke of York, probably influenced by the king, to give them a patent for the territory west of the Hudson and the bay, and as far south as Cape May; this they named Nova Cæsarea, or New Jersey. With thirty emigrants, English and French, Capt. Philip Cartaret, a cousin of Sir George, and governor of the new territory, sailed for New York, but by stress of weather was driven into the Chesapeake. While lying there he forwarded despatches to Bollen, who was commissary at the fort in New York, and also to Nicolls. This was the first intimation the governor had received of the dismemberment of the extensive territory over which he ruled; he was both astounded and chagrined; he had already conveyed several parcels of land within the limits of the new grant, and regarded the whole as the best part of the duke's domain. He remonstrated, but his remonstrances came too late, the duke evidently thought he had been too precipitate, but as he could not well retrace his steps, he suffered matters to remain as they were. Cartaret arrived in New York about midsummer, 1665, and immediately took possession of his government. He chose Elizabethtown as his capital. It is said that when he first landed on the soil of New Jersey, he carried a hoe upon his shoulder, in token of his intention to devote his attention to the promotion of agriculture.

After the Duke of York had conveyed the territory of New Jersey to Berkley and Cartaret, a doubt arose whether Staten Island was not included in the grant, by the terms of the char-



ter. Cartaret, the governor, not the proprietor, laid no claim to the island; on the contrary, he tacitly admitted that it did not belong to his jurisdiction, by accepting a conveyance for a tract of land on the island from Nicolls, the Duke of York's agent; this he would scarcely have done, had he considered his brother the proprietor. In 1668 the island "was adjudged to belong to New York," because one of the outlets of the Hudson river ran around the island; while Berkley and Cartaret, by the terms of their patent, were bounded by the river and bay. The Dutch always appear to have regarded the inner bay or harbor as a mere expansion of the river, and the Narrows as its mouth. In their documents, Staten Island is frequently described as lying in the river. If this view was correct, the island evidently belonged to New Jersey, because it was embraced within its limits. The Duke of York himself appears to have had his doubts about the matter, for it is said, that when the question of jurisdiction was first agitated, he decided that all islands lying in the river or harbor, which could be circumnavigated in twenty-four hours, should remain in his jurisdiction, otherwise to New Jersey.

Christopher Billop, being then in the harbor in command of a small ship called the "Bentley," which it is also said he owned, undertook the task of sailing around the island, and accomplished it within twenty-four hours, thus securing it to the duke, who, in gratitude for the service rendered him, bestowed upon Billop a tract of 1163 acres of land in the extreme southern part of the island, which was called the "Manor of Bentley," after the ship which had accomplished the task.

In 1684 the question of the proprietorship of Staten Island was again agitated, and many of the landowners became apprehensive of the validity of their title, and some of them, among whom was Billop, were desirous of selling, but as no purchasers could be found for a dubious title, the property remained in the family. Dongan was directed, if the Billop estate was sold, to find some purchaser for it in New York, and not to suffer it to pass into the possession of a resident of New Jersey.

There is still preserved in the secretary of state's office at Albany the copy of a letter written by Governor Dongan, whose country residence was on Staten Island, to Sir John Werden,



Earl of Perth, and dated February 18, 1684-5. From this letter the following extracts will be of interest:

“The Island had been in the possession of his R<sup>ll</sup> Highness above 20 years (except ye little time ye Dutch had it) purchased by Gov. Lovelace from ye Indyans in ye time of Sir George Carteret without any pretences ’till ye agents made claime to it ; it is peopled with above two hundred ffamilies. \* \* \* \* \*

“The Quakers are making continued pretences to Staten Island, which disturbs the people, and one reason given for holding it is that if his Royal Highness cannot retrieve East Jersey it will do well to secure Hudson’s River and take away all claim to Staten Island.”

The proprietors of New Jersey had complained to Dongan against his encroachments. Dongan himself does not seem to have been perfectly satisfied with his title, for when he obtained his own patent from the Duke of York for a large tract upon the island he strengthened it by securing another patent from the East India proprietors, who had been the previous owners. This took place about the time when the province of New York was divided into counties.

New York claimed jurisdiction, and exercised it over the waters as far as low water mark on the Jersey shores, when the latter province opposed this exercise of public authority. New Jersey argued that the original grant gave that province jurisdiction to the middle of the Narrows, and therefore she owned Staten Island. New York, on the contrary, pleaded long possession, and the controversy produced great excitement between the two parties. The agitation of the question continued at intervals all through the colonial period, sometimes being revived with great bitterness, and extended for half a century into the state period.

In 1807 commissioners were appointed from both states to settle the dispute, New Jersey insisting that Staten Island was within her border. Nothing, however, was accomplished by this interview, and it terminated in angry discussion and bad feelings. For several years a border excitement was kept up, until the deputy sheriff of Richmond county, while serving a process on board of a vessel near the Jersey shore, was arrested and imprisoned for violating her territory, the state authorities, however, avowing that this was done only to test the question of jurisdiction.

In 1827 new commissioners were selected to settle the dispute,



but they separated as before, without accomplishing anything. At length, in 1833, the dispute between the two states was amicably arranged by concession. New York obtained the acknowledged right to Staten Island, with the exclusive jurisdiction over a portion of the adjacent waters, by conceding to New Jersey a like privilege to other portions. New York thus secured this legal claim to most of the Lower bay, quite down to Sandy Hook; and in return New Jersey obtained the same rights over the waters on the west side of the island, as far as Woodbridge creek, in the neighborhood of Rossville. Thus was settled in an amicable manner a subject which once threatened a serious disturbance of the harmony between the two sister states.

Under the Dutch and early English governors a number of land grants were issued. But very few of those issued under the former dynasty held under the latter. The important ones of that class have already been noticed. Occupants of lands under Dutch patents were doubtless required to take out new patents or confirmatory grants under the English rule. All these patents were granted to individuals, and the most of them were for comparatively small parcels of land. These we cannot notice in detail. There are two, however, which, partly because of their magnitude and partly because of the historic persons and associations connected with them stand sufficiently prominent to warrant a somewhat extended notice. These are the Dongan patent and the Billop patent. The time of their issue was about the period of which we are writing, but in giving an account of them we shall be compelled to anticipate other periods and disregard the orderly progression of our general history.

To the first of these two patents then let us turn our attention. Though not the first to receive a royal patent yet the first to be occupied by the proprietor for whom it was named was the Billop patent. Definite statements are wanting to fix the time when Christopher Billop first received actual possession of the tract which for a long time bore his family name. At the time when the Duke of York seemed to be wavering in opinion as to whether Staten Island belonged to the jurisdiction of New York or New Jersey, and finally decided the matter for himself by declaring that all islands lying in the river or harbor which could be circumnavigated in twenty-four hours should remain





in the former, and others should be counted in the latter jurisdiction. Christopher Billop, as has before been stated, accomplished the task of sailing around the island within twenty-four hours, thus securing it to the duke, who bestowed upon Billop a tract of 1163 acres of land in the extreme southern part of the island. Here Billop built his manor house, which has withstood the storms of more than two centuries, and is said to be in good condition at the present day. Another account says that Billop received the plantation as a *douceur* from the Duke of York for his gallantry in some naval office.

In 1674 the Duke of York, by permission of the king, organized a company of infantry of one hundred men; of this company Christopher Billop was commissioned second lieutenant. He had served his king before his arrival in America, but in what capacity is not known; his father, however, was not well spoken of. In 1677 Billop, while residing on his plantation on Staten Island, was appointed by Governor Andros, who had succeeded Lovelace, commander and sub-collector of New York, on Delaware bay and river. While occupied with the duties of these offices, he "misconducted" himself by making "extravagant speeches in public;" but of the subject of these speeches we are not informed; they were probably of a political character, and must have been peculiarly offensive, for Andros recalled him the next year, and deprived him of his military commission. This action of the governor was approved by the duke, who directed that another should be appointed to fill the vacant lieutenancy.

Billop now retired to his plantation on Staten Island, there to brood over the ingratitude of princes, or perhaps over his own follies and indiscretions. We hear nothing more of him for two years, when he again appears as one of a number who preferred complaints or charges against Andros, to the duke, some of which must have been of a serious nature, as the duke thought it necessary to send an agent over to investigate the matter, and on receiving his report, Andros was summoned to to appear in person in England to render his accounts. This was probably in 1680 or 1681, when Brockholst succeeded Andros; in 1682 Dongan succeeded Brockholst. Here we lose all farther historical trace of Christopher Billop; tradition says that in the latter part of the seventeenth, or the beginning of the eighteenth century, he sailed for England in his ship, the



"Bentley," and was never heard of after: he left no male issue, but he had at least one daughter. While he remained on the island, however, he obtained a patent for his plantation from Governor Dongan, which bore date on or about June 6, 1687.

There was also a Joseph Billop residing on the island about this time. He was a justice of the peace in 1702-3 and a judge of the county in 1711. In 1704, April 25th, he received a conveyance of a parcel of land from the "Right Honble. Thomas, Earle of Lymrick," the land in question being described by boundaries "beginning at a Blacke Oake by the burying place Agst. Abrah: Lackman's House." There was also a Middleton Billop living in the city of New York, who died in October, 1724. Whether these men were near relatives of Christopher or not we have not discovered.

The principal part of the original tract passed through the hands of successive generations of his descendants till the close of the revolution. In 1704 he sold a small parcel to John, Peter and James Le Counte, sons of Peter Le Counte "late of said island."

Captain Christopher Billop married a Miss Farmer, by whom he had one daughter, Eugenia, born in or about the year 1712. Mrs. Billop was probably a sister of Thomas Farmer, who was prominent on Staten Island, where he was a judge of the court of sessions in 1711. He removed hence, however, during or soon after that year, and afterward became a judge of the supreme court of New Jersey and representative of Middlesex county in the assembly of that state. The oldest son of this Thomas Farmer, his name likewise being Thomas, married his cousin, the daughter of Christopher Billop, and succeeded to the inheritance of the manor of Bentley. In order to satisfy the ambition of the family to perpetuate its name young Farmer adopted the name of Billop.

Thomas Farmer Billop and his wife occupied the mansion and estate during the latter years of the first half of the 18th century. From them it fell to the possession of their son Christopher, while they were "gathered to their fathers." The old family cemetery in which their remains were deposited was situated some three hundred yards to the east of the old manor house, in a cultivated field and beneath the shade of a few large trees which once stood there. It contained but a few graves,



and only the graves of the two persons last mentioned were honored by headstones containing inscriptions. These inscriptions were as follows:

“Here Lyes y<sup>e</sup> Body of Evjenea y<sup>e</sup> Wife of Thomas Billopp. Aged 23 years Dec<sup>d</sup> March y<sup>e</sup> 22<sup>d</sup> 1735.”

“Here Lyes y<sup>e</sup> Body of Thomas Billopp Esqr Son of Thomas Farmar Esqr Dec<sup>d</sup> August y<sup>e</sup> 2<sup>d</sup> 1750 In y<sup>e</sup> 39<sup>th</sup> year of his Age.”

These stones are now lying in the barn yard near the Billop house and are more or less broken to pieces. For more than a century they marked the graves to which they belonged. The spot is now marked by a single cedar tree. Several years since the crumbling bones were removed thence, by order of the proprietor of the ground, and the stones of the graves thus desecrated, which themselves, it would seem, possessed value as historic relics sufficient to warrant their careful preservation, were broken and ruthlessly consigned to the rubbish pile as we have seen.

Christopher Billop, the only son of the above of whom we have any knowledge, though he had a sister Sally (who married Alexander Ross of New Jersey, in 1775), was born about the year 1735, and rose to a position of great prominence in the county. We are informed that he was twice married, but who his first wife was we have been unable to learn. His second wife was Jane Seaman, daughter of Judge Benjamin Seaman, of this county. Besides being a gentleman of character and property, he was a member of assembly, and on the eve of the revolution commanded a corps of loyal militia which was raised in the vicinity of New York city, and was during the revolutionary period actively engaged in military duty. At the outbreak of the war he was a steadfast opponent of the measures that led to a rupture with Great Britain. By the intensity of his loyalty to the British crown he made himself conspicuously obnoxious to the whigs of Staten Island and New Jersey. He held the commission of a colonel in the British army, and at one time, in 1782, had the title of superintendent of police of the island. Communication between the island and New Jersey had been prohibited by the British authorities, and he was very active in enforcing the prohibition. The patriots of New Jersey were exceedingly bitter in their hostility to him, and on two different occasions made him prisoner. Amboy is



in sight, and upon one of these occasions he was observed by some Americans, who had stationed themselves with a spy glass in the church steeple of that town. As soon as they saw him enter his abode, they ran to their boats, rapidly crossed the river, and he was soon their captive. The British, then in possession of New York, had confined in irons several Americans who had been made prisoners; and to retaliate for this measure Colonel Billop was taken to Burlington jail. We have copied the mittimus, as a matter of curiosity, and as showing the method of doing such things at that eventful period.

“To the keeper of the common jail for the county of Burlington greeting:—You are hereby commanded to receive into your custody the body of Col. Christopher Billopp, prisoner-of-war, herewith delivered to you, and having put irons on his hands and feet, you are to chain him down to the floor in a close room, in said jail, and there to retain him, giving him bread and water only for his food, until you receive further orders from me, or the commissary of prisoners for the state of New Jersey, for the time being. Given under my hand, at Elizabethtown, this 6th day of Nov. 1779.

ELISHA BOUDINOT,  
*Com. Pris. New Jersey.*”

The commissary at the same time regretted to Billop that necessity made such treatment necessary, “but retaliation is directed, and it will I most sincerely hope, be in your power to relieve yourself from the situation by writing to New York to procure the relaxation of the sufferings of John Leshier, and Capt’n Nathaniel Randal.”

He was finally released by order of Washington. During the period of the war Billop disposed of some parts of his estate. On the 10th of May, 1780, he sold to Joseph Totten a tract of twenty acres, and another of three and a half acres in the manor of Bentley, for £235 currency, and on the 29th of the same month he sold to Benjamin Drake a tract of sixty acres from his estate, for £600 currency. On the first of May, 1781, he and his wife Jane, conveyed to Samuel Ward, of Richmond county, for £3,730 current money of the city of New York, the tract opposite Amboy, known as the manor of Bentley, “Containing three hundred and Seventy-three Acres of Land and salt meadow, be the same in Quantity more or Less, being Bounded Easterly by Land of said Albert Rickman Northerly





by the river or sound at Low water mark and westerly and southerly by the Bay at Low Water mark." In this conveyance houses, barns, ferry-house and dock, out-houses and stables are specified by name. From the tract is reserved for the heirs of Billop sixty feet square for a burial place, the headstone of his father being the center of such reservation.

During the revolution the home of Colonel Billop was frequented by men of distinction and rank in the British army. After the war Billop with fifty-four other royalists in 1783 petitioned Sir Guy Carleton for extensive grants of land in Nova Scotia. Colonel Billop soon after went to New Brunswick, where for many years he bore a prominent part in the administration of the affairs of that province. He was a member of the house of assembly, and of the council, and on the death of Governor Smythe in 1823 he claimed the presidency of the government, and issued his proclamation accordingly, but the Honorable Ward Chipman was a competitor for the same station, and was sworn into office.

Colonel Billop died at St. John, N. B., in 1827, being then over 90 years of age. His wife, Jane, who was about twenty years younger than himself, died in that city in 1802, aged 48. He had a son, born on Staten Island in 1769, named John Willett, and another son by the name of Thomas. They settled in the city of New York, and had a dry goods store on Broadway in the vicinity of Trinity church. John never married, but fell a victim of yellow fever at the time the city was scourged by that terrible disease. Thomas, who had a family, of whom, however, nothing is known, except that his wife was a Miss Moore of Newtown, L. I., survived the fever, failed in business, joined the expedition of the celebrated Miranda, in which he received the appointment as captain, and was taken prisoner by the Spaniards and afterward executed. Besides these two sons Colonel Billop had four daughters. Louisa married John Wallace, Esq., surveyor of the customs. Mary married the Rev. Archdeacon Willis, of Nova Scotia, and died at Halifax in 1834, at the age of forty-three. Jane became the wife of the Hon. William Black of St. John, and died in 1836. Ann, the youngest daughter, was a maiden lady, and was the last of the family of whom any record appears of their visiting the ancestral homestead. She visited the spot in 1824, and took some flowers of an old trumpet creeper vine that was growing



on the house, and some nuts and wild cherries from trees that were growing in the burial plot, and on her return carried them to her father in New Brunswick. It is said that on beholding them the heart of the old colonel melted with emotion and he wept like a child.

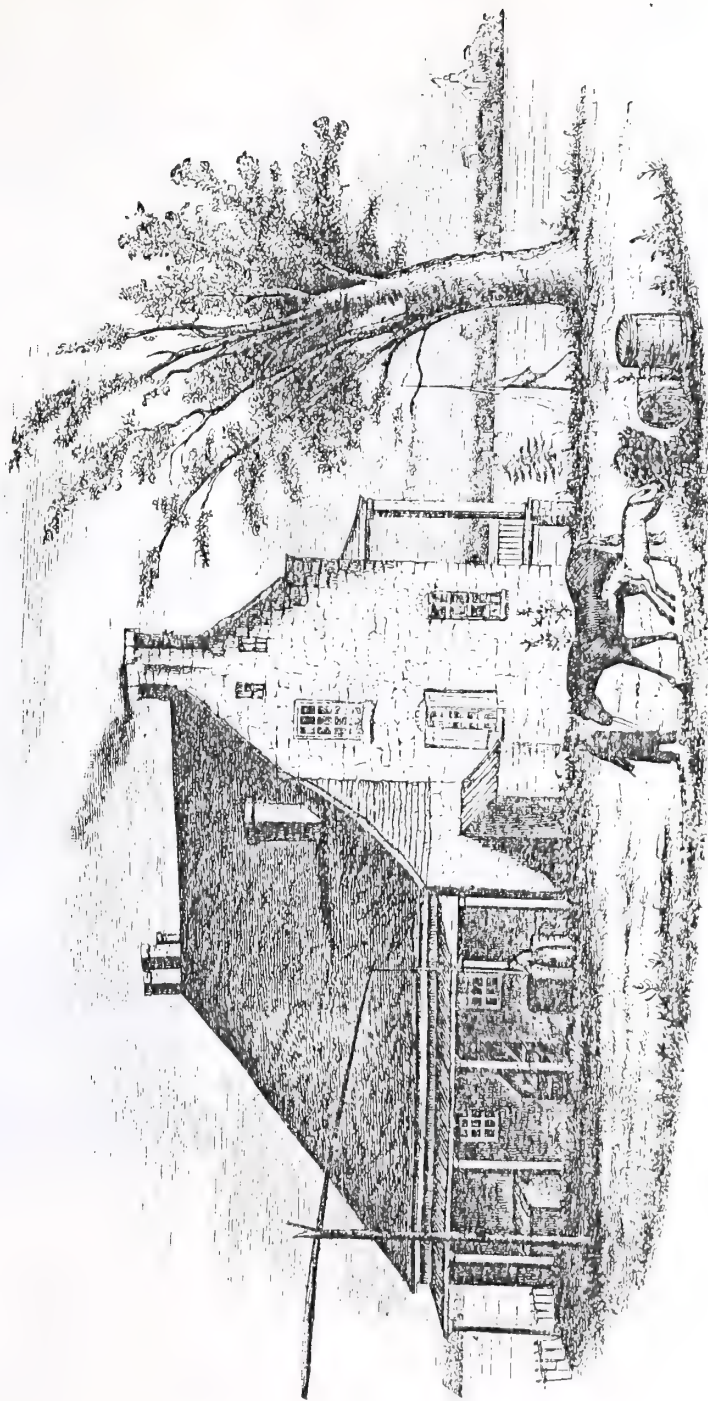
We have neglected to say in a more appropriate place that Colonel Billop had two daughters by his first wife, of whom we only know that they married sons of Benjamin Seaman, one of whom was Benjamin and the other Henry.

The large estate once belonging to Colonel Billop was confiscated and sold by Isaac Stoutenburgh and Philip Van Cortland, commissioners of forfeitures for the southern district of New York. The sale made July 16th, 1784, was recorded in the following memorandum :

“Sold to Thomas Mc Farren of the City of New York, Merchant, for the sum of four thousand six hundred and ninety-five pounds Lawfull Money of the said state—All that certain Tract or parcel of Land situate Lying and being in the County of Richmond and Manor of Bently, *Bounded* Southerly by the Bay or water called Princes Bay, westerly by the river that runs between the said Land and Amboy Northerly partly by the Land of Jacob Reckhow and partly by the road and Easterly partly by the road and partly by the Bay, Containing Eight hundred and fifty acres and half an acre and which said Tract is divided into the several following Farms and Lots of Land—three hundred and seventy three acres thereof in the possession of Samuel Ward—Two hundred Acres in the possession of Albert Ryckman, Fifty acres in the possession of John Manner—Fifty acres in the possession of Edmund Wood—Fifty acres in the possession of Andrew Prior—Twenty five Acres in the possession of James Churchward, sixtyseven acres and an half acre in the possession of Benjamin Drake—Twenty three acres and an half acre in the possession of Joseph Totten—Eleven acres and an half acre in the possession of Jacob Reckhow—Together with all the Buildings and Improvements thereon Erected and made Forfeited to and Vested in the People of this state by the Attainder of Christopher Billop Late of the County of Richmond Esquire.”

The historic house is still standing. It occupies a beautiful site overlooking the river or Staten Island sound, with Amboy





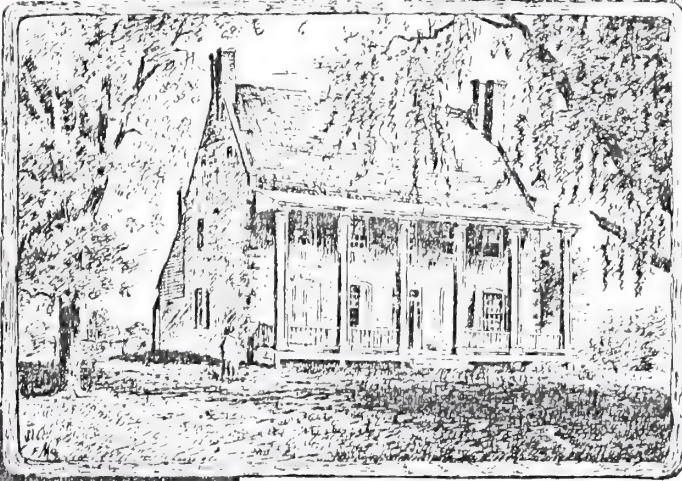
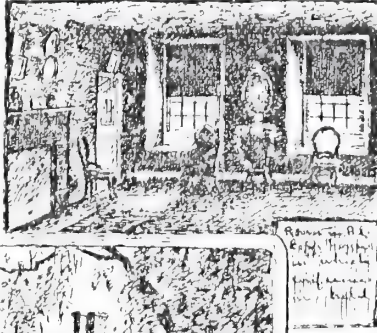
OLD BILLOP HOUSE, LOOKING TOWARD SOUTH AMBOY.  
As it appeared half a century ago.



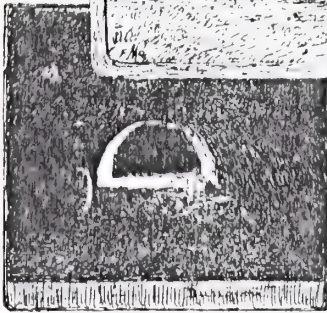


in view on the opposite shore and the Jersey landscapes fading in the distance.

The old mansion was built of stone—its walls three feet thick—and bears the marks of former affluence and elegance. Like most buildings of the “olden time,” it has its ghost and other romantic stories. “There,” said the person who now occupies the house, as we entered one of the upper story front rooms, “that spot on the floor we have never been able to wash out. It is supposed to be blood, and a murder is said to have been perpetrated here. This, too, is the ghost room,



THE OLD BILLOP HOUSE, TOTTERVILLE.



but I have never been disturbed by such visitors, and believe neither of these stories.” A person had visited an adjoining apartment last winter, searching for hidden treasure. He had been told by some mesmerist or fortune-teller of New York that money was to be found concealed

in one of the walls of this room, and absolutely picked with hammer and chisel a large opening, but finally gave over the search as hopeless. This strange credulity was here exhibited in the winter of 1844.

In the cellar of the building there is a brick vault thirty feet





long and about thirteen wide, finely arched, and may have been used as a place of retreat, or the receptacle for valuable articles in cases of emergency.

The interior of the house presents nothing remarkable in appearance. The hall and staircase are extremely plain. In fact there is no decoration to be seen anywhere. The rooms have been undersized in a manner approaching meanness.

As Billop was a well known "tory," and a military character also, his house must have witnessed many an interview of such men as Lord Howe, General Knipphausen, Colonel Simcoe and other officers of rank in the British service who had command at various periods on the island. Immediately after the severe battle on Long Island, Lord Howe sent a communication to congress, then assembled in Philadelphia, soliciting that a committee from that body might meet him, to confer on the difficulties between the two nations. For this purpose, Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and Edward Rutledge were appointed. The interview took place in this house, and these noble, patriotic, American spirits declined every proposition for peace that would not acknowledge the independence of their beloved country.

This conference took place in the room at the northwest corner of the house on the main floor. This momentous interview was regarded with extreme solicitude by the people of both the old world and the new. With the developments of time it rises into the grandeur of a great battle point and monument of history. The interview was brief. There was no agreement, no reconciliation. Independence was maintained. The result was limned by the hand of God, and is seen in the progress of a continent and the achievements of a century all over the world.

There is a beautiful lawn before the house, extending quite down to the water's edge. The views from the mansion are extensive, and rich in natural beauties. Directly in front the eye rests on Amboy bay, the town itself beyond, and the Raritan river, which here expanding into the general body of waters the whole soon flows onward to the mighty Atlantic. Toward the south, at a more remote distance, are seen the mountains of Monmouth and the bold summits of Nave Sink, upon whose lofty highlands, the beacon-fires of 1776 blazed to alarm the country upon the expected approach of the enemy.

What a blessing is peace! How changed the scene! Upon



these very heights now glisten nightly the cheering rays of the light-house, welcoming the traveller of every nation to our land of freedom and happiness! Where once was heard the deafening drum and clarion of war, here now the anvil rings, the merry wheel dances, and the carol of the peaceful plow-boy resounds, while he traces the enriching and silent furrow!

We shall now turn our attention to the Dongan patent and the persons connected with it. This brought into direct and intimate association with the island one of the most prominent of the colonial governors, and one whose acts have been more conspicuously brought before a wide range of interests, people and times than perhaps any other.

At the time of Dongan's arrival, there dwelt in the city of New York a gentleman named John Palmer, by profession a lawyer, who, at the time of the separation of Staten Island from the Long Island towns, was appointed "ranger" for Staten Island. He had formerly lived on the island of Barbadoes, and had emigrated thence to New York. In 1683 he lived on Staten Island, and was appointed by Dongan one of the two first judges of the New York court of oyer and terminer. He was also a member of the council, and generally an active and prominent man in the affairs of the province. To this man Dongan executed a patent, known in the island history as the Palmer or Dongan patent. The small brook which forms a part of the boundary between the towns of Castleton and Northfield, and which runs to the mill pond, is still known by the name of "Palmer's Run," because it also formed a part of the boundary of the land conveyed by the patent.

An attempt seems to have been previously made by Dongan to gain possession of this large property, but for reasons which will appear the transaction was repeated in the manner above stated. The first transaction of which we find any record is dated January 14, 1684-5, when Governor Dongan purchased of John Palmer of Staten Island and Sarah his wife, for the sum of twelve hundred pounds, "All that their Capitall Messuage or dwelling house with the Appurtenances situate lyeing and being on the north side of Staten Island Aforesaid within Constables hooke neere the Mill Creeke late in the Occupacion and possession of the said John Palmer, And *All* that Certaine Parcell or tract of Land thereunto belonging being upon the north side of Staten Island aforesaid within Constables Hooke lyeing



between the two runnes att the mill creeke beginning with A narrow point And Running up wider into the Island Containing the quantity of three hundred forty and two Acres with meadow Ground to be laid out proportionably." The conveyance also includes other parcels, the title to which had been obtained as recited in their specifications in substance as follows: Ninety-six acres to the east of Mill creek, with the mill, which was granted to Palmer by Governor Andros in 1677, upon which had also been built by Palmer two windmills and a sawmill; eighty acres which had been conveyed to Palmer by Francis Barber who had a grant from Sir Edmund Andros; ninety acres, with eight acres of meadow, which had been granted by Andros in 1680 to Jacob Cornelis, and by him conveyed to Palmer; another like tract of ninety acres with eight acres of meadow, granted to James Gyles, by Andros, and by Gyles conveyed to Palmer; and a tract of four thousand five hundred acres of land lying in a body in the middle part of the island, with an island of meadow near Fresh kill. "All which Said Last mentioned tract or parcell of Land And Island of meadow were Granted unto the Said John Palmer," by Governor Dongan by patent dated May 2, 1684. Thus it will be seen the premises purchased by Dongan had been obtained in small parcels, through different channels and under grants of different dates. It was desirable that they should be consolidated, and treated as a unit, and that some manorial privileges should be associated with their proprietorship.

The early provincial governors having shown some disposition to appropriate too much land to themselves, they had been restricted by an order in council, to evade which the plan was devised of granting a patent to Palmer for this land, and then having a transfer made from Palmer to Dongan. The patent to Palmer was approved at a council held March 31, 1687, at which were present Governor Dongan, Anthony Brockholst, Frederick Phillips, Stephanus Van Cortlandt and Nicholas Bayard. The instrument bears date as above, and begins as follows:—

"Whereas John Palmer of the City of New York Esqr. as well by virtue of Several deeds and Patents to him or them under whome he claymes made by the former Governors of this Province as by virtue of a certain Patent or Confirmation under my hand, and seale of the province, bearing date the second day of May, 1684: stands Lawfully and Rightfully Seized of &



in all that Tract or parcell of Land Beginning at a cove on Kill Van Cull, on the east bounds of the lands of Garret Cruise [Cruser] and so running in the woods by the said Kill to a marked tree, and thence by a line of marked trees according to the natural position of the poles, south and by east two degrees and thirty minutes southerly according to the compass south, there being eight degrees and forty five minutes variation from the north westward, and from thence by the reare of the land of Garret Cruise & Peter Johnson, east & by north two degrees and thirty minutes to the line of Peter Johnson's wood lott, & by his line south and by east two degrees and thirty minutes south sixty-one chains, and thence by the reare of the aforesaid lott & the lott of John Vincent northeast & by east one degree northerly to the southeast corner of the land of John Vincent thirty three chains & a halfe, from thence by his east line south & by west two degrees thirty minutes northerly to a white oak tree marked with three notches, bearing northwest from the fresh pond, from thence to a young chestnutt tree the southwest corner of the land of Phillip Wells & so by a line of marked trees east nine degrees & fifteen minutes southerly by south side of a small fresh meadow to the north & to the north of the fresh pond including the pond to the land of Mr. Andrew Norwood & so by his land as it runs to the reare of the land of Mary Brittain & so by the reare of the Old Town lotts to the land of Isaac Bellew & Thomas Stilwell & from thence upon the Iron Hills, to the land of William Stilwell & by his land to the land of George Cummins & from his northeast corner, to the southeast corner of the land of Mr. James Hubbard at the head of the fresh kills & so round by his land to the reare lotts at Karles neck & so by the lotts to the highway left by Jacob pullion & the great swamp to the land of John Hitz Garrett including the great swamp, thence by the soldier's lotts and the reare lotts of Cornelis Gersen & company to the southwest corner of their front lotts & so by the runne which is their bounds to the mill pond including the mill pond to the sound or Kill Van Cull & so by the sound to the cove where first begun. Containing with all the hills, valleys, fresh meadows & swamps within the above specified bounds five thousand one hundred acres be the same more or less.—Also a great island of salt meadow lying near the fresh kills & over against long neck not yet appropriated—and all the messuages,





tenements, fencings, orchards, gardens, pastures, meadows, marshes, woods, underwoods, trees, timber, quarries, rivers, brooks, ponds, lakes, streams, creeks, harbors, beaches, fishing, hawking and fflowling, mines, minerals (silver and gold mines only excepted) mills, mill dams," etc.

By the patent it was also constituted one lordship or manor "to be called the Lordship and manor of Cassiltowne." It was subject to an annual quit-rent of one lamb and eight bushels of winter wheat, to be paid if demanded on the 25th of March in each year.

On the 29th of September, 1677, Governor Andros executed a patent to Garret Croosen (Cruser) for one hundred and sixty acres of land on the north side of Staten Island, which is bounded on the west by "a small runn of water." It is difficult, if not impossible, at this day to trace the boundaries of some of the old patents, but we assume that the "runn of water" mentioned in the patent is the stream issuing out of the "boiling spring" on the Bement estate, as that spring was formerly called the "Cruser spring," and in conveyances of even recent date the "runn" is called the "Cruser Spring brook." The land conveyed was one hundred and seventeen rods in breadth, which would reach nearly or quite to the Pelton estate. This estate once belonged to one of the Cruser family, but probably it was by a subsequent purchase. The Palmer patent begins at a cove on "Kill Van Cull," on the east bounds of the lands of Garret Cruser; probably the word *east* is a clerical error, and should have been *west*, but even on that supposition the boundaries described in the latter patent would embrace Lovelace's property. If we assume "the cove" to be that next west of and adjoining the Pelton estate, the boundaries would embrace the properties both of Lovelace and Cruser. The natural outlet of the Cruser spring brook was at or near the place where the surplus water from the works of the New York Dyeing and Printing Establishment now enters the kills. The pond of this establishment is an artificial structure, made nearly a century ago for the use of a mill which stood on the "Factory Dock." The main stream which supplies this pond is also an artificial canal; the natural outlet of the water which now supplies the pond was through Bodine's pond into the kills. In Governor Dongan's days, these waters supplied a pond in the rear of the reservoir of the gas company on the



south side of Post avenue, for the use of his mill, which we have elsewhere alluded to as the mill in which guns were said to have been concealed at the time of the papist panic.

On the 16th day of April, 1687, John Palmer and Sarah, his wife, conveyed the territory described above to Thomas Dongan, "for a competent summe of lawfull money," after an ownership of about a fortnight.

It is now quite impossible to trace the lines described in the patent, as the most of the land-marks mentioned therein have disappeared. If by the terms "great swamp" is meant that extending from Graniteville to New Springville, and which is so designated in a variety of other ancient documents; and if by "ffresh kills" is meant the waters now known by that name, and which are also frequently alluded to by that name in similar documents, it is evident that the territory conveyed embraced not only the greater part of the present towns of Castleton and Middletown, but a large proportion of Northfield also.

Dunlap says that Governor Dongan, having doubts about Staten Island belonging to New York, and in order to be doubly sure, procured a patent in 1687 for the same land from the proprietors of East Jersey.

In the following year, 1688, Governor Dongan erected his manor house, which remained until the present decade, and though externally modernized in some degree the oak frame, hewn out of the adjacent forest, was the identical one erected by him, the date of its erection having been marked upon one of the timbers with white paint. The house alluded to stood in the middle of the square bounded by the shore road on the north, Cedar street on the south, Dongan street on the east, and Bodine street on the west, at West New Brighton. There is now a gradual descent of the surface of the land from the site to the shore road; but, originally, the earth was as high on the southerly side of the road as it now is at the place where the house stood, forming a sand hill between the house and the road, and which entirely concealed the house from view when standing in the road in front of it. When this sand bank was removed, several skeletons, evidently of Indians, besides numerous other Indian relics, were unearthed, indicating this spot as having been one of their burial places. This time-honored relic was at last destroyed by fire. A large barn.



standing on the mill road which was also built during the early years of the proprietorship of Governor Dongan, was burned on the 18th of July, 1862. Through this extensive domain a road was opened at an early period toward the village of Richmond, and this early road still bears the name of Manor road. A tide mill stood until a recent date on the causeway across Palmer's run. The old Dongan mill stood farther south, on an old road which ran around the head of the pond, the course of which in part has been followed by the construction of Post avenue in West New Brighton. After the construction of the causeway the old road, which before had been the only way of passing between the localities of West New Brighton and Port Richmond, ceased to be used until the opening of Post avenue. The pond which is alluded to in the Palmer patent received the tide, and boats at high water could reach the door of the old mill. This mill was largely patronized by the people of Bergen Point and its vicinity, as well as by the people of the island.

When the present avenue was constructed, the foundation stones, and some of the decayed oak timbers of the old mill, were unearthed, but no cannon. In the latter part of the last century, a flouring mill was built on the present steamboat wharf at West New Brighton, and the most of the water which had propelled the old mill, was diverted from its natural course by a canal which led it into the large pond at the foot of the present Water street, which pond was then constructed to hold the water in reserve for the use of the new mill; this was built by a McVickar, though it subsequently passed into the hands of the Van Buskirk family, and was better known as Van Buskirk's mill. This mill was burned a few years ago, and the wharf, the pond and the canal for more than half a century have belonged to the New York Dyeing & Printing Establishment. After the construction of the causeway, and the diverting of the water, the pond has gradually filled up, until now it can scarcely be utilized for the purpose to which it was once devoted.

In a review of the life and acts of one so intimately associated with the island as Col. Thomas Dongan was it is proper to give some notice to his antecedents and the stock whence he came. We find Governor Dongan associated with the nobility of England and Ireland. In a list of the baronets of Ireland,



with a list of their creations, we find the name of Walter Dongan, of Castletown, in the county of Kildare, to which is attached the date 1623. Castletown park is in the northeast corner of the county of Kildare, about ten miles southwest of the city of Dublin. Sir Walter Dongan, who was made baronet October 23, 1623, belonged to a family who were pronounced "valiant, active and faithful." They were in 1646 and later on connected with the army, and in recognition of their faithfulness and devotion to their king, William, a brother was promoted to the dignity of viscount of Claine, county of Kildare, in 1661. In 1685 he was made earl of Limerick. At the battle of the Boyne he lost an only son, who was killed by a cannon ball. The son was buried at Castletown, the seat of his father, Lord Dongan, earl of Limerick. The estate of Lord Dongan was forfeited, he being attainted April 16, 1691, but was restored again by act of parliament, December 15, 1699. In "Burke's Encyclopedia of Heraldry" appears the following description of the Dongan coat of arms:

"Quarterly first and fourth, gu. three lions pass. or, holding in the dexter paw a close helmet argent garnished or the second; second and third azure six plates on a chief or a demi lion rampant gules. *Crest*—A lion passant or, supporting with the dexter foot a close helmet argent garnished of the first."

To this noble family Col. Thomas Dongan belonged, though what his relationship was to the Earl of Limerick we have not the means of determining. Some claim that he was a brother Colonel Dongan having a commission as governor, arrived in New York August 27, 1683. His commission was dated September 30, 1682. To him the present state is indebted for many of its existing records and laws. He was a firm believer in the religious and political faith of James II. except, perhaps, that Dongan was far more tolerant, and hated the French, under whom he had once served as a military officer. Though a professed papist, he was a decided enemy to the French, whose schemes of aggrandizement on the northern frontier he persistently opposed, even against the expressed wishes of his master, the Duke of York, afterward James II. The people of the province, and especially of the island, where he resided, lived in constant dread of his religion. Later on he was ordered to proclaim James II king, to assist at the conference between Lord Ellingham and the Five Nations, and in causing





the king's arms to be set up through all their villages and to place arms in their hands.

Colonel Dongan had the Indian affairs very much at heart, and had gained the respect and esteem of the Five Nations. He was deeply interested in the intercourse of the French and English with them, and jealous of the action of the former. In carrying forward this work in which he was so much interested, he was obliged to mortgage his property to Robert Livingston to secure the payment of the expenses of the expedition to Albany in 1689. This mortgage is dated May 1, 1689, the sum which was secured by it was £2,172, 6s, 2½d, which Livingston had, by Dongan's order, laid out for eight month's provisions for the troops and presents for the Indians. The term of the mortgage was five years. It covered not only the manor of Castletown, but other parcels which Dongan had bought on the island. These were one hundred and eighty acres at Old Town, bought of Mary Britton, another parcel at Old Town, bought of Peter None, and another, on the south side, bought of James Largie.

Besides these possessions on Staten Island, Governor Dongan had a large tract on the Hudson river, extending from Haverstraw to Murderer's creek, a tract of four hundred acres in Queens county given him by the people of Hempstead town for renewing their patent, and another tract on Martha's Vineyard, besides property in the city of New York. On Staten Island he had a "hunting lodge." The city records contain an account of a meeting of the council at which Governor Dongan was absent "being engaged at his hunting lodge on Staten Island, killing bears." At the time of the papist panic in 1689 it was suspected that Colonel Dongan was in sympathy with the plot, and his mill was searched, and four guns were found in it. These it is said were secreted under some bags and blankets. Leisler issued orders for his arrest, but we do not know that it was accomplished.

After his release from office Colonel Dongan retired to his possessions on Staten Island, where he remained till the spring of 1691, if not longer. Later, but at what time is not known, he retired to his native country, Ireland, where it is said he finally succeeded to the earldom of Limerick. In a conveyance now on record in the clerk's office of this county bearing date 1715, he is styled as such.



On the 9th of May, 1715, Colonel Thomas Dongan, by the conveyance just mentioned (which is in itself a curious and rare specimen of legal skill, on account of its complex limitations and conditions) "being willing to preserve and uphold and advance the name and family of Dongan, and having no issue of his own to continue the same," conveyed to his nephews, Thomas, John and Walter, and to the male issue of the survivor or survivors of them, "in tail male for ever," all his manor of Castle-town, together with property situated elsewhere. This act and its final results is a demonstration of the scripture passage which we quote from the XLIX Psalm: "Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish."

Having thus disposed of his estate in this country, he died, as some think, in London, in 1715, at the ripe old age of 81 years. He was buried in St. Pancras' church-yard, Middlesex, just north of London. This old church-yard has long been noted as the burial place of such Roman Catholics as die in London and its vicinity. It is accounted a desirable resting place for different reasons, one of which is that St. Pancras' was the last church in England where mass was held after the Reformation. The sepulchre of the late Governor Dongan bears the following inscription:--

"The Right Honble. THOMAS DONGAN Earl of LYMERICK, died *December* the fourteenth. Aged Eighty one years.

1715.

*Requiescat in pace. Amen."*

Leaving the founder of the name and estate of Dongan on Staten Island we will now follow as well as we are able the descent of the family and title line of the estate. Of the nephews we know but little.

John probably had but little or nothing to do with Staten Island. Beyond the appearance of his name in a list of subscribers toward finishing Trinity church steeple, dated May 1, 1711, we have found no trace of him. He may have been unmarried, or died without male issue and therefore had no share in the estate on Staten Island.

Thomas is but little known in records pertaining to Staten Island. It is said that he sold his share of the possessions of



his uncle. He may have been a man of high passions and sumptuous living, with reckless habits. He was involved in a duel with Dr. John Livingston, September 7, 1713, in which Livingston was killed. The trial of Dongan by the supreme court took place two days later, and he was found guilty of manslaughter. Without knowing what his subsequent fate was, we are obliged to leave him here. There is slight ground for the conjecture that he left this country for Ireland and died there in 1721.

Walter has left some evidences of being a man of honor and business ability. He occupied the manor house and a large portion of the landed estate. His custom was to lease his lands to tenants. He was surrogate of the county in 1733. He married for his first wife, Ruth, daughter of Richard Floyd (2d), of Setauket, L. I., whose wife was Margaret, daughter of Colonel Matthias Nicoll, the secretary of the colony. Walter and Ruth Dongan had three children, Thomas, Richard and Elizabeth. Ruth, who was born August 6, 1699, died July 28, 1733. Walter afterward married a Miss Sarah Herriman of Elizabeth, N. J., by whom he had a son, Edward Vaughn Dongan. Walter died July 25, 1749, being fifty-seven years of age. His estate on the island descended mainly to his oldest son Thomas, and his widow afterward married John Herriman, of Elizabeth. The daughter Elizabeth was born in 1729, and died July 1, 1749, aged 19 years and 7 months. Her grandfather, Richard Floyd, remembers her in his will, dated February 27, 1738, in the following item: "I give also unto my Grand Daughter Dongan, that is to say the Daughter of my beloved Daughter Ruth Dongan Deceased, one hundred Pounds Current lawful Money of New York to be paid on her Marriage Day." As she died unmarried, this item was never executed.

Edward Vaughn Dongan was born January 3, 1749. After his father's death he went with his mother to live in Elizabeth. He was brought up a lawyer and lived at New Brunswick, N. J., where he married a daughter of Squire La Grange, a lawyer of that place. On the outbreak of the revolution he made himself obnoxious on account of his adherence to royalty and was driven from his home before the British landed in New York. His father-in-law and family were in sympathy with him, and their estate was afterward forfeited. Edward Vaughn Dongan



was in command of a body of loyal troops, with the rank of colonel, and was posted at the Morning Star at the time of Sullivan's raid on Staten Island, August 22, 1777. In this engagement he received a wound from the effects of which he died in the hospital in New York city on the first of September. His only child, which with its mother had suffered great exposure on the day referred to, died on the same day, and was buried in the same grave with him. His widow afterward went with her family to reside at Farmington, Hackney, England.

Richard Dongan, the second son of Walter, went to sea when a young man. During the French war he was impressed on board a British man-of-war, and in the service lost an arm. He married Miss Cornelia Shanks of Long Island, by whom he had a son, Walter, who was born January 2, 1763, and another son who died young. Richard died January 1, 1780, in his 61st year; and his wife died April 28, 1814, in the 83d year of her age. This Walter had a distillery, located near a copious spring on the Richmond turnpike, near Four Corners. He also possessed a large farm at that place, whether by inheritance or purchase we have not learned. He had two sons, Thomas and Richard, and four daughters, one of whom married a Mr. Toombs, another married Peter La Forge, and the names of the other two were Abigail and Ruth. Walter died in February, 1855.

We now take up the direct line in which the manor house with its accompanying estate was held until it passed out of the possession of the family altogether.

Thomas Dongan was the eldest son of Walter, the nephew of the ex-governor. His first wife was Rachel, and she died April 25, 1748, at the age of 24 years. She had one daughter, who died December 22, 1749, 3 years of age. Both wife and daughter are buried in the old Moravian cemetery. Thomas afterward married Magdalen, the eldest daughter of Rev. Richard Charlton, rector of St. Andrew's church. By her he had a son, John Charlton Dongan. Thomas Dongan appears as a vestryman of Trinity church, New York, from 1748 to 1759. In order to adjust the claims upon him to which his young half brother Edward V. was entitled, he on the 15th of April, 1757, gave a mortgage to John Herriman and Sarah his wife (the step-mother of Thomas, she being the late widow of his father) on several tracts of land lying in the manor of Castletown, adjoining each





other, and then being in possession of tenants, to secure the payment of £40 a year till Edward Vaughn should reach his majority, and the payment of £1,000 when that time arrived. In consideration of these payments Edward Vaughn should relinquish all claim against the said Thomas or the estate of the late Walter Dongan. The aggregate extent of land covered by this instrument was about seven hundred acres. The will of Thomas Dongan bears date March 8, 1765, and it appointed his wife, Magdalen, sole executrix, and by it he bequeathed to his son John Charlton Dongan, all his estate, and in case of his death, while in his minority, the estate was to go to his mother and to her heirs forever. Of the time of his death we are not informed.

John Charlton Dongan, son of Thomas, and grandson of Walter the nephew of the governor, was educated for a lawyer, and was admitted to the bar May 6, 1791. He was a man of some prominence in his time. He was a supervisor here in 1785, and was in the state legislature several times, where in 1788-9 he was a prominent leader of the Schuyler or federal party and served on some important committees. As an attorney-at-law he had an office at 25 Courtlandt street, New York, in 1795. He possessed a considerable land on State street, New York, in addition to the estate on Staten Island, which then comprised about six hundred acres, all of which he inherited from his father. He is said to have been an honorable man, but being a free liver and given to drink, he fell into careless habits and descended the scale of respectable standing and financial advantage until he reached the lowest extreme. His wife was Parience Moore, of Newtown, L. I., a sister of Benjamin Moore of that place. She, it is said, was of little advantage to him, being herself also a partner in his failings. They had only two children, Thomas Charles Bradish, who died November 25, 1789, and John Charlton, Jr., who died October 23, 1791, a little over 5 years of age. His State street property was sold and its proceeds lost in speculation. He became involved and, about 1795, sold the manor house and the accompanying estate to his brother-in-law McVickar, whose wife was sister to his wife. He then had a general vendue and sold off all the stock and movables belonging to the estate, and the sale returned about \$10,000. He and his wife agreed to put this in bank and live on the proceeds. She returned to her own fam



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ily, the Moores, at Newtown, and he, sinking still deeper in intemperance, accepted the position of a sergeant of foot or marines and went on a voyage at sea on a man-of-war. This was in 1798 or 1799. He was familiarly known as "Jack" Dongan. The last of his financial resources were finally exhausted and, broken down in health, he became a public charge for his living. Fortunately he had a god-mother, who lived in Jamaica, West Indies, and she learning his condition, sent money to pay his passage, and he went thither to complete the measure of his broken down life under her generous care and patronage.

The remnant of the lordship containing the manor house was sold by John C. Dongan to John McVickar. He occupied it as a country seat from 1795 to 1802, when he sold it to Alexander McComb. McVickar constructed a canal two miles long from Fresh pond to the mill, took a hand in many public enterprises, and helped Mr. Vanderbilt the elder to funds with which to procure a piragua and dock at Factoryville. McComb sold the place to John Bodine, the younger, and he to his father. By the latter it was sold to Judge Edwards for Abraham Varick. But why continue to follow the changes. The glory of the manor has departed; the last lord of its dominion has a long time slept in his grave, and the venerable manor house has been swept away by the devouring flame. Surely "man in honor abideth not."

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"This Following Pattent for a Peece of Land Lyeing att Karles Neck att the Fresh kill on Staten Island Granted to Barne Ty-sen being Omitted to be Recorded when Granted is Now Entred att the Request of the said BARNE TYSEN this 29th day of November. 1681.

" Edmund Andros Esqr. Seignior of Sausmarex Lievt. and Governor Generall under his Royall. Highs. James Duke of Yorke and Albany &c. of all his Terretorys in America Whereas by Virtue of my Warrant yr. hath Benn Laid out for BARNE TYSEN a Certaine Peece of Land Lyeing at Karles Neck at the Fresh Kill upon Staten Island being in Breadth by the Meadow side fforty and five Rods Ranging South East two hundred Eighty and fouer Rods Being Bounded to the Southwest by the Land of Thomas Morgan to the South East by the Commons and to the North East by the Land of Wofford Proll with tenn



Acres of Salt Meadow fronting to the said Land and fouer Acres of Fresh Meadow upon the Hills in the Reare of the Neck Containing in all Ninety fouer Acres as by the Returne of the Survey und<sup>r</sup> the Hand of the Surveyor: Doth and may appeare Know Yee that by vertue of his Maties Letters Pattents and the Commission and Authority unto me Given by his Royll Highs I have Given and Granted and by these Presents Doe hereby Give and Grant unto the said Barne Tysen his Heires and Assigns the afore recited Peece of Land and Premisses with their and every of their Appurtenuces. To have and to hold the said Peece of Land and Premisses unto him the said Barne Tysen his Heires and Assignes unto the proper use and Behoofe of the said Barne Tysen his Heires and Assignes *For* ever Hee making Improvem<sup>t</sup> thereon according to Law and Yeelding and Paying therefore Yearly and every Yeare unto his Royll Highs use as a Quitt Rent one Bushell of Good Winter Wheate unto such Officer or Officers as shall be Empowred to Receive the same. Given under my Hand and Sealed with the Seale of the Province in New Yorke this twenty Ninth Day of September in the 29th Yeare of his Maties Reigne Annoq Domini 1677.

The Meadow to be proporconable with the Rest of the Inhabitants.

E. ANDROSS.

“ Examined by me

“ MATTHIAS NICOLLS Secr.

I do hereby Certify the foregoing to be a true  
Copy of the Original Record Compared there  
with By me.

“ LEWIS A. SCOTT, Secretary.”

“ Recorded at ye Request of Daniell Lake & Compa

“ William the third by the Grace of God of England Scotland France and Ireland King Defender of the Faith &c To all to whome these p<sup>r</sup>sents shall Come Sendeth Greeting. Whereas our Loveing Subjects Daniell Lake and Joseph Holmes have by their Petitions Presented unto our trusty and well beloved John Nanfan Esqr our Lt Govern<sup>r</sup> & Commander in Cheif of our Province of New Yorke and the Territories Depending thereon in America &c Pray our Grant and Confirmation of a Certain Tract of Land on Staten Island in the County of Richmond





Beginning at ye Northwest Corner of the Lott of Land Laid out for Peter Billjean in the Reer of his three Lotts Granted by Sr Edmond Andros & Runs thence North Westerly by the Line of Abraham Lakerman & William Barker to ye Land of Tennis Eghberts and Vincent fountain & so runs alongst his Line North Easterly to the South East Corner thereof thence to the Northwest Corner of Jacques Guyen & so by the Reer of of Bitteans Lotts Westerly to ye Place where begunn being Bounded on the Northwest by Abraham Lakerman & William Barker on the North East by Tennis Eghberts and Vincent fountain on the South East by the Lotts of Isaac Billjean & on the South West by the Lotts of Peter Billjean Containing two hundred acres wch reasonable request wee being willing to Grant Know Yee that of our Speciall Grace Certain Knowledge and meer motion wee have Given Granted Ratifyed and Confirmed & by these presents Doe for us our Heires and Successors Give Grant Ratifye and Confirme unto our <sup>sd</sup> Loveing Subjects Daniell Lake and Joseph Holmes all the aforecited Tract of Land within our County of Richmond & within the Limitts & Bounds aforesd together with all and Singular the Woods Underwoods Trees Timber feedings Pastures Meadows Marshes Swamps Ponds Pools Water watercourses Rivers Rivoletts Runs Streams fishing fowling hunting and hawkeing Mines Mineralls Silver and Gold Mines Excepted and all other Profitts benefitts Priviledges Liberties Advantages Hereditamts and appurtenances whatsoever to the afoerecited Tract of Land within the Limitts and bounds aforementioned belonging or in any wise appertaining to have and to hold all the afoerecited Tract of Land together wth *all* and Singular the woods underwoods Trees Timber feedings Pastures Meadows Marshes Swamps Ponds Pools watercourses Rivers Rivers Rivoletts Runs Brooks Streams fishing fowling hunting and hawkeing Mines Mineralls Silver and Gold Mines Excepted & all other Proflitts Benefitts Priviledges Liberties Advantages Hereditaments and appurtenances whatsoever to the aforesd Tract of Land within the Limitts and Bounds aforementioned belonging or in any wise appertaining unto to them the said Daniell Lake and Joseph Holmes their Heires and assigns to the only Proper use benefitt and behoof of them the said Daniell Lake and Joseph Holmes their Heires and assigns forever to be holden of us our Heires & Successors in free and Comon Socage as of our Mannr of East



Greenwich in our County of Kent within our Realm of England Yielding Rendring & Paying therefore Yearly and every Year unto us our Heires and Successors at our City of New Yorke on the feast Day of the Nativity of our blessed Saviour the annuall and Yearly Rent of twelve Shillings Curr<sup>t</sup> Money of New Yorke in Lieu and Stead of all other Rents Dues Dutys Services and Demands whatsoever In Testimony whereof wee have Caused the Great Seale of our said Province to be hereunto affixed Witness John Nanfan Esqr our Lieut Govern<sup>r</sup> & Comander in Cheif of our Province of New Yorke &c at our ffort in New Yorke the 20th day of Aprill in the fourteenth year of our Reign.

“JOHN NANFAN.

“By his hon<sup>rs</sup> Comand

M: CLARKSON, Seery.

“I do hereby Certify the foregoing to be a true  
Copy of the Original Record.

“Compared therewith By Me

“LEWIS A. SCOTT, Secretary.”

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Many other patents were granted for lands on Staten Island. These we have already said were generally for small parcels. From the quit-rents affixed to such grants the colonial governors obtained a considerable revenue. A patent was granted by Governor Fletcher, December 20, 1697, to Sarah Scidmore for a tract of land on the south side of the island, at Old Town. The annual quit-rent on this was four shillings. The tract was soon after in the possession of Jacob Berger, and by the middle of the century belonged to John Keteltas in whose family it remained for several generations. A patent was granted by Queen Anne, September 1, 1708, to Francis Vincent for several parcels of land on the island, in which mention is made of the following adjoining owners: Peter Lecount, Albert Janson, one Pinhome, John Melyore, John Breveele, Francis Welton, John Bodine, Benjamin Cooper, Mark Dussassway, Abraham Cannon, Jacob Galliot, John Cashee and Joshua Carsoon. In locating these parcels the following neighboring points are mentioned: Courtlandt, Fresh kill (16 acres of salt meadows at the mouth of it, “being almost round a certain Hammock of Upland,” which is included, the whole “bearing N. W. from the house of



John Morgan"), Daniel's neck, Thomas's creek, Charles's neck, and Abraham Cannon's creek.

The last royal patent for lands on Staten Island was granted by Queen Anne, to Lancaster Symes, on the 22d of October, 1708. It conveyed all unappropriated lands, meadows, etc., etc., on the island, at an annual rent of six shillings current money of New York, payable on Lady-day of each year. It is recorded at Albany in book No. 7 of Patents, page 371, and quite recently recorded in this county.

The following receipts copied from the originals will be of interest to show the manner in which the business was done. Numerous receipts of the kind may be found in all parts of the county.

"Received of Arent Van Amer Two Bushells and a half of Wheat in full for One years Quitt Rent of two Lotts of Land on Staten Island, one Granted to Philip Bendell & the other to John Taylor the 15th December 1680, being to the 25th March last, as Witness my hand this 12th August 1761.

RICH<sup>d</sup> NICHOLLS Dep<sup>y</sup> Rec<sup>r</sup> Gen<sup>l</sup>."

"Received of Arent Van Amer Five bushells of Wheat in full for two Years Quitt Rent of the two Lotts of Land above mentioned to the 25th March last. As Witness my hand the 10th June 1763.

RICH<sup>d</sup> NICHOLLS Dep<sup>y</sup> Rec<sup>r</sup> Gen<sup>l</sup>."

"Received of Aarnt Van Amer Five Bushells of Wheat in full for two years Quitt Rent of the two Lotts of Land above mentioned to the 25th of March last. As Witness my hand this 2<sup>d</sup> May 1765.

RICH<sup>d</sup> NICHOLLS Dep<sup>y</sup> Rec<sup>r</sup> Gen<sup>l</sup>."

The above receipts are all written in a distinct, but very cramped hand on a scrap of paper 4 by 6 inches. The three following are written on the reverse side of the same paper.

"Received of Arent Van Amer two bushells and a half of Wheat in full for one years Quit Rent of the before mentioned Lotts of Land due 25 March last.

New York 14 May 1766 JOHN MOORE Dep. Rec<sup>r</sup>. Gen<sup>l</sup>."



“Received of Arent Van Amer Two Bushells & a half of Wheat in full for One Years Quit Rent of the before mentioned Lotts of land due 25 March last.

Witness my hand 13 May 1767

JOHN MOORE Dep. Recr. Genl.”

“Recd of Arent Van Amen Two Bushells & half of Wheat in full for one Years Quit Rent of the above mentioned Lotts due 25th March last. Witness my hand the 6th July 1768.”

There are three other receipts for wheat, bringing the payment down to March 25th, 1775. The individual mentioned by the names of Arent Van Amer—Van Amen—Van Naum, was Aaron Van Name, the grandfather of Mr. Michael Van Name, and his brother Charles Van Name, both of Mariner’s Harbor.

“Patent granted to John Taylor for a Tract of Land on Staten Island dated 15th Decemr 1680 at One & a half Bushel Wheat per Annum.

Aaron Van Naum	{	From 25 March 1775 y m
		to 25 May 1787 is 12 ; 2
		Deduct 8.—

	4. 2 @ 9/	£1. 17. 6
14 years commutation	9/	6. 6. —
		£8. 3. 6

Reced New York June 21st 1787 from Aaron Van Naum per the hands of Joshua Mercereau Esq. Public Securities which with the Interest calculated thereon to the 25th May last amounts to Eight Pounds three shillings & Six Pence in full for Arrears of Commutation on the above Patent.

£8. 3. 6

PETER S. CARTENIUS State Audr”

It will be observed that during the royal government the quit rent was payable in wheat, according to the terms of the patent. Under the federal government it appears to have been commuted for money.

Resuming the order of our narrative we find the commotions





which had disturbed the people here for many years and finally reached the culmination of disorder and unrest in the usurpation of Leisler, were followed by an extended period of comparative tranquility, during which the colonial government was established upon a more equitable basis and was more uniform in its administration. From this time forward till the disruption of the colonial government in May, 1775, the throne of Great Britain held undisputed control over the colony of New York. The government, as then constituted and afterward maintained, was composed of the governor and council, appointed by the throne, and the assembly, whose members were elected by the freeholders of each county. The council at first numbered seven members, but was afterward increased to twelve. The governor was the chief executive. The legislative power lay in the governor, council and assembly. All laws were further subject to the revision of the king, to whom they were always to be sent within three months from the date of their passage.

Governor Slaughter appears to have shown more regard for the rights and wishes of the people than his predecessors had done, or some of his successors did. He succeeded, as far as the nature of the government would allow, in quieting the commotions that had disturbed the peace of the people, and in restoring harmony and friendly relations in the colony. Among his first acts was the confirmation, under the seal of the province, of all grants, charters or patents that had previously been issued. We may say that with his administration a new era commenced. The gubernatorial reins passed in frequent succession from one to another down through the prosperous years of the colony.

The governors and time of their administrations were as follows, those who died in office being marked by an asterisk (\*):

Henry Slaughter,\* 1691; Richard Ingoldsby, 1691-92; Benjamin Fletcher, 1692-98; Richard, Earl of Bellmont,\* 1698-1701; John Nanfan, 1701-02; Lord Cornbury, 1702-08; John, Lord Lovelace,\* 1708-09; Richard Ingoldsby, 1709-10; Gerardus Beekman, 1710; Robert Hunter, 1710-19; Peter Schuyler, 1719-20; William Burnet,\* 1720-28; John Montgomery,\* 1728-31; Rip Van Dam, 1731-32; William Casby\*, 1732-36; George Clarke, 1736-43; George Clinton, 1743-53; Sir Danvers Osborne,\* 1753; James De Lancey, 1753-55; Sir Charles Hardy,



1755-57; James De Lancey,\* 1757-60; Cadwallader Colden, 1760-61; Robert Monkton, 1761; Cadwallader Colden, 1761-65; Sir Henry Moore,\* 1765-69; Cadwallader Colden, 1769-70; John, Lord Dunmore, 1770-71; William Tryon, 1771-77.

We now turn to notice the courts, the officers connected with them, and some of their works, during this period. The courts were at first held in different places in the county, wherever convenience indicated. It is not known at what time they were first held at Stony Brook as a regular place for them, but we find the custom prevailing during the early years of the eighteenth century. At the same time the jail seems to have been at "Cuckoldstown," the early name for Richmond, where it was built in 1710, as the following order would indicate:

"Ordered that Mr. Lambart Garisone and Mr. Wm. Tillyer. See the prison House built at Cuckols Towne—y<sup>e</sup> Dimensions Twelve foot in breadth, fourteen foot Long, Two Story high, six foot y<sup>e</sup> Loer Room from beam to plank, and the uper Story Six foot, all to be built with stone, and for building of the sd. prison the Said Undertakers have hereby power To take the Monys out of the Collectors hands for carying on the sd. work & the order of y<sup>e</sup> sd. Undertakers & Receipts shall be a Suffi-  
cient discharge to y<sup>e</sup> sd. Collectors."

This building proved inadequate to the purpose as is seen by the fact that at a court of sessions held in the court house at Stony Brook, on the 5th day of March, in the ninth of his Majesty's reign (1723), "Benjamin Bill Esq<sup>r</sup> high Sheriffe of the County of Richmond Complains to the Court of the Insufficiency of his majesty Goal for the said County that it is all together soe Insufficiency that it is impossible to keep any prisoner safe as the Said Goal Divers prisoners having lately Escaped thereout and therefore the said sheriffe protest against the Inhabitants of the County of Richmond for Repairing the said Goal and against all waits Escapes that may Enssue for the Insufficiency of the said Goal and pray that his protest may be entered accordingly."

In 1725, Nicholas Larzelier, then high sheriff, repeated the same complaint in the same terms. Two years after he repeated it again, but what result attended the complaints we are not informed. A new court house and jail were probably erected at Richmond, whence the county seat was removed and estab-



lished. The earliest mention of the court of sessions being held at Richmond is dated September 2, 1729.

Previous to the erection of a court house the courts were held in private houses or taverns. The following entry gives some hints :

“March 2, 1713—— Court a journed till to morow at Ten of the Clock in the forenoon to the North Side To Coll Grahams Court opened, and ajourned Till y<sup>e</sup> list Tuesday on 7ber [September] next.—God Save the Queen.”

Col. Aug. Graham was one of the judges of the common pleas and sessions.

Debtors were arrested and obliged to give bail or go to prison. The return of the precept of arrest by the sheriff or constable was “Cepi Corpus.” In almost every instance where a prisoner was acquitted by the jury, he was discharged by the court upon payment of costs. The courts of general sessions were frequently conducted by an overflowing bench, as for example, on the 22d of September, 1761, there were present the first, second and third judges, and nine justices, making in all a bench of twelve. It was a common thing for a court to be constituted with eight, nine or ten judges.

The following abstracts from court records will be read with interest :

“At a Court of Sessions held for the county of Richmond March 3, 1712.

“Jos. Arrowsmith, Lambert Garrison, Nathl Britton, Abm. Coole [Cole], Peter Rezeau, Esq<sup>s</sup>.

“March y<sup>e</sup> 4th. Court opened and Grand Jury calld. The presentmts of the Grand Jury brought in; the Court orders proress to be issued out against those presented—viz. Peter Bibout for beating Mr Mony [Manee] and his wiffe. Barnt Marling, Andrew Bowman, William Foord & The Taylor peter peryne & Vn. Buttler, Peter Catherick and Nathl Brittin Junr. all for fighting. John Dove and John Bilew for carrying of Syder upon the Sabbath Day. Abraham Van Tyle for allowing his negroe to Cary Irone to the Smiths on the Sabbath day, and Mark Disosway for being drunk on the Sabbath day.”

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At a court of sessions held March 5th, 1716, “it was ordered by the court that Nicholas Brittin pay Twelve shillings fine for his misbehavior to Nathl Brittin Esq. and also ordered that









Names attached; "1 Abraham corshon, 2 richard crips, 3 John mengalroll, 4 garet cruse, 5 philip merel, 6 honas deker, 7 barnt sweme, 8 ranses bodine, 9 nicholes stilwell, 10 nichles depue, 11 John boker, 12 tunas te bout, nickles bush, mr couanouer, art simanson, Jacob benet, lambart garison, thomas lisk, alexander lisk, ben goman ayrs."

On the reverse of the venire are the following endorsements:

"Richmond County July the 29  
the Jury finds for the sd defendant.

venire .....	0. 1. 6
to the constabel.....	0. 0
swaring the Jury.....	2. 0
swaring y evdens.....	1. 6
swaring the Constel.....	6
Entring verdeck.....	1. 0
	<hr/>
	6—6

The last court of common pleas and general sessions in this county under the colonial government was held September 26, 1775. Following that a period of nearly nine years elapsed before another court of the kind was held.

The following names appear as justices of the peace in this county at an early period: Ellis Duxbury, 1692; John Shotwell, 1692; Abraham Lackman, 1693; Cornelis Corsen, 1689-90; Joseph Billop, 1702-3.

The only case of capital punishment executed under a decree of the colonial courts, of which we have learned, took place about two or three years before the revolutionary war. We depend entirely upon tradition for the account of it, which is as follows: A negro, named Anthony Neal, was accused of breaking into and robbing the store kept by Col. Aaron Cortelyou. The goods that were taken from the store did not exceed in value twenty dollars, and they were all found secreted in a wheat feald near by. The accused negro, after being imprisoned about two months, was tried and convicted and hung. The execution took place just by the school house at Richmond, the negro protesting his innocence with his latest breath. It is said that on the day following the execution his wife confessed that she had committed the theft herself.

A slight outline of certain important events in European history now appears necessary as an introduction to the memorial



of an interesting incident, of which Staten Island was the scene in the autumn of 1761. Between the years 1756 and 1763 the seven years' war raged in Germany. In this remarkable contest the great Frederick had to defend his recently acquired Silesia and the new kingly dignity of his house against the combined powers of France, Austria and Russia. This war with "the three petticoats" (Elizabeth, Maria Theresa and the Pompadour), as he facetiously termed them, was in fact, on his part, a desperate struggle for existence, in which he would perhaps have succumbed but for the aid of England. In that country Frederick, whose religious ideas were of the most unorthodox liberality, came somehow to be regarded as "the Protestant hero," and after ignominiously defeating the French he naturally became the popular idol.

This same seven years' war covers in American history a space of nine years, and is known by the name of the French and Indian war, beginning in 1754, with the disputes about the French and English colonial boundaries in the Mississippi and Ohio valleys, and blending ultimately with the great European contest. In the spring of 1755 the colonies made extensive preparations for an attack on the French, but owing to the ignorance of their commanders in regard to the tactics of Indian warfare the campaign was utterly unsuccessful. Crown Point and Niagara were both assailed, but neither captured. In the campaign of 1756 the English losses were even greater, their fort at Oswego, with 1,600 men, being captured by the French. This was followed by the still more unsuccessful campaign of 1757, in which Fort William Henry, on Lake George, with its garrison of 3,000 men was compelled to surrender to the French.

In 1758, William Pitt (afterward Lord Chatham) was placed at the head of the government as prime minister of England. A new impulse was now given to the energies of the nation, and success followed. In July, Louisburg, which at the former peace had been restored to the French, was recaptured. Fort Frontenac was captured soon after, and the French were compelled to abandon Fort du Quesne. General Abercrombie attacked Fort Ticonderoga, but was obliged to retire.

Encouraged by these successes, the colony of New York renewed her exertions with the utmost energy. In 1759, during the short period of five months she raised a sum of \$625,000 to aid



in carrying on the war, and levied a force of 2,680 men. In that levy the quota for Richmond county was 55 men. Ticonderoga was captured by General Amherst, early in the season, and Crown Point surrendered a few days later. In July, General Prideaux invested Fort Niagara, and though he was killed in the attack, Sir William Johnson, his successor in the command, effected its reduction. On the 13th of September, General Wolfe laid down his own life in the moment of victory, when the English banners floated over the towers of Quebec. In 1760, the French made an unsuccessful attempt to recapture Quebec, and on the 8th of September, all the French possessions in Canada, except the two small islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, at the mouth of the St. Lawrence, were surrendered to the English. The provincial forces who had been engaged in its reduction, now turned their faces homeward, while a large body of British troops were established in a camp on Staten Island, where they remained for several months. General Robert Moncton had command of this army. During their encampment here an important ceremony, the investment of Sir Jeffery Amherst with the "Order of the Bath" took place, and to this interesting event our introductory remarks under this subject pointed. Probably Staten Island was never honored with being the scene of a more dignified or important royal ceremony.

On the 28th of August, 1761, General Amherst, having rode on horseback down the west side of the Hudson river from Albany, arrived in camp at Staten Island. The 35th regiment of British regulars, called Otway's regiment, from its commander, had arrived in the Staten Island camp from Albany about two weeks previous. The ceremony of investing General Amherst with the knighthood took place October 25, 1761, in the presence of all the dignitaries of the province and a large concourse of spectators, assembled at the camp on Staten Island.

The explanation will not be out of place here that the military order of Knights of the Bath originated, as is supposed, about the time of Henry IV, of England. At the coronation of that king, in 1339, a number of esquires were made knights of the bath because they had watched and bathed meanwhile during the preceding night. From that time it was usual for the kings of Great Britain to create knights of this order on great and joyous occasions, such as their own coronation or the birth or marriage of princes or on the eve or following the successful



issue of some great foreign expedition. The investment of General Amherst was probably in honor of the advantageous conclusion of the struggle with the French on the Canadian frontier. The badge of the order was of pure gold, a sceptre of three united imperial crowns, from which grew the rose, the thistle and the shamrock, and around which was inscribed the ancient motto, "*Tria juncta in uno.*" It was hung by a red ribbon from the collar obliquely over the right shoulder. Other accessories of the insignia a massive gold collar, rich in engraved designs, and a silver star resembling the badge and with a glory of rays proceeding from its center, to adorn the left shoulder. The order was divided into three ranks, designated in importance as first, knights grand crosses; second, knights commanders, and third, knights companions. The proper place for their installation to be celebrated was in the nave of Henry the Seventh's chapel, Westminster Abbey, which in this instance was impracticable. The warrant for the ceremony here was found in the following letter from the prime minister of England:

"Whitehall, July 17th, 1761.

"Sir,

"His Majesty having been graciously pleased, as a Mark of His Royal Approbation, of the many and eminent Services of Major General Amherst, to nominate him to be one of the Knights Companions of the Most Honorable Order of the Bath; and it being necessary that he should be invested with the Ensigns of the said Order, which are transmitted to him, by this Opportunity; I am to signify to you the King's Pleasure, that you should perform that Ceremony; and it being his Majesty's Intention, that the same be done in the Most Honourable and Distinguished Manner that Circumstances will allow of, you will concert, and adjust with General Amherst such Time and Manner for Investing him with the Ensigns of the Order of the Bath as shall appear to you most proper for shewing all due Respect to the King's Order, and as may, at the same Time mark in the most publick Manner, His Majesty's just sense of the Constant Zeal, and Signal Abilities, which General Amherst has exerted in the Service of His King and Country.

"I am &c.

"W. PITT.

"Honourable Robert Monckton."





In presence of the concourse of people assembled at the time and place appointed for the ceremonies General Moncton read the foregoing letter, and then proceeded to place the ribbon over General Amherst's shoulder, meanwhile making an apology that circumstances would not admit of more formal investiture. To this General Amherst replied in the following short speech :

"Sir: I am truly sensible of this distinguishing mark of His Majesty's royal approbation of my conduct, and shall ever esteem it as such. And I must beg leave to express to you the peculiar satisfaction I have, and the pleasure it gives me to receive this mark of favor from your hands."

Demonstrations of applause followed the ceremony, and a few days later, when General Amherst went from Staten Island to the city his arrival there was greeted by the firing of seventeen guns from Fort George. He was now spoken of as "his Excellency Sir Jeffery Amherst, K. B., from the army on Staten Island." Following this ceremony General Moncton was installed governor of New York, and the city was illuminated.

Governor Moncton did not remain in the seat of state, but appointing a deputy, he went with the army on its expedition to the West Indies. The army encamped on Staten Island comprised eleven regiments who had returned from the Canadian frontier, under Generals Moncton, Amherst and Otway. The encampment was on the central part of the island, and they remained here from August till November. Here they formed a market and invited the farmers to bring in stock and produce to sell to the army. When all was ready the army embarked on board of a fleet of one hundred sail of vessels, which on the 15th of November put to sea with a fair wind.

Reviewing the French war, we find but little in which the people of Staten Island were directly connected with it. They raised their proportion of money and their quota of men as contributions to sustain the cause. Of the men we have no knowledge farther than that Thomas Arrowsmith was captain of a company in 1758 and '59, and Anthony Waters was a captain in 1760.

One of the most important services was the capture of the French Fort Frontenac, on the 27th of August, 1758. With 3,000 men, mostly provincials, Colonel Bradstreet traversed



the wilderness between Albany and Lake Ontario, carrying with him eight pieces of cannon, and three mortars. Among these troops was a regiment commanded by Colonel Corse, of Queens county, and in that regiment was Captain Thomas Arrowsmith's company of Staten Islanders. This regiment contributed materially to the success of the expedition. Corse volunteered to erect a battery during the night of the 26th, and effected his purpose under a continuous fire from the fort. On the morning of the 27th, this battery opened on the enemy, who at once deserted the fort and fled. The material captured with the fort consisted of forty-six pieces of cannon, sixteen mortars, and a very large quantity of military stores, provisions and merchandise.

In connection herewith the following advertisement which appeared in April, 1756, affords interesting suggestions and explains itself, though we do not know the result:

## SCHEME

Of a Lottery for raising One Hundred and Fifty Pounds.

"Whereas the Free holders and Inhabitants of the County of Richmond, are enabled by an Act of the Governor, Council and General Assembly, of the Colony of New York, to raise by Way of Lottery a Sum not exceeding the sum of One Hundred and Fifty Pounds, to purchase Arms and Accoutrements, for the Use of such Persons, in the said County, as are unable to provide themselves therewith, in Cases of Necessity. And whereas the said County of Richmond is a Frontier County, and liable, in Case of an Attack, to be the first invaded, it is hoped all Lovers of their Country will generously encourage the said Lottery.

No. of Prizes.		Pieces of Eight.		Whole Value.
1	of	375	is	375
2		187	and a half are	375
4		125		500
10		25		250
25		12		300
40		10		400
60		5		300

---

142 Prizes.

858 Blanks.

---

1,000

---

Tickets at 2 and a Half Pieces of 8 is 2,500



“As soon as the Lottery is finished Drawing, the Prizes will be published in the New York Gazette, and the Money paid to the Possessors of the fortunate Tickets, fourteen Days after the Drawing of the said Lottery, Fifteen per Cent. being first deducted out of the Whole; which several Deductions of Fifteen per Cent. are to be applied for the Purposes aforesaid.

“Proper Notice will be given by the Persons appointed to manage the said Lottery, of the precise Time of Drawing the same; which Persons are Mr. Samuel Brooms and Colonel Benjamin Seamans, who are to give Bond, and be under Oath, for the faithful Performance of the Trust reposed in them.

“Tickets are to be sold by the said Managers at their respective Dwellings, in the said County, and by the Promoters hereof.”

Some description of scenes and physical improvements under the colonial period will be of interest, and may perhaps be presented here as fitly as elsewhere. The laying out of roads was one of the first forms of public improvement, some of which remain in their original position to the present day. As matter of interest in connection herewith we copy the following record.

“This following Instrument was Recorded for the Inhabitants of the west divishone by the order of the worshipecfull bench sitting in Coarte of seshones the week In september 1694 for the Regulating & Laying out all the highwayes with in said quarter & Entred upon Record the :9th day of septr 1694. Richmond County this first day of september annoque dom: 1694: By vertue of Awarend dyreckted to the Constabell of the west dyvishone with In the fore said County to sommonse the free holders of said quarter to Asemble & meete to Gather to Ereckte Apoainte & Lay out such hyghwaies with in said quarter As the Inhabitants shall thinke fitt and most Conveainent for the youse & behoofe of his magistie and his subgeekts & for the Inhabitants That lives back in the woods to transport themselves & Goods to the water sid. The freeholders having mett to Gather on the day & yeare Above written And ordred and apoainted & Laid out the highwayes as heare after are spresified

:1: ordered one highway of six Rod to be betwene Anthoney deshon and Iofa fonoay Cut by Consent Alltred and Laid out betwene Anthoney deshon and Jerome deshon begining att the Could spring



: 2 : To one highway betwene Clays Lazeleare & John Cornealisone of six Rod

: 3 : To one highway betwene Williame Elstones Land deceased & abraham Coole of six Rod.

: 4 : To one highway betwene mr Leflore & peter Jonsea wide of six Rod

: 5 : To one high way betwene Adame hud & mr Emet next to adem hud of six Rod

: 6 : To one high way betwene fransis barber & the Copper Planes of six Rod

: 7 : To one high way betwene John Ray & markes disosway of six Rods

: 8 : To one highway betwene mr John Lecount & Capten bilope of six Rod

: 9 : To one highway from the west side begining att mr Lecounts frount & Runes Cleare over throw the wods by the Line of Capten bilope to the widow bealies house

: 10 : To one highway betwene Cornell dongones Land and anthoney Tyse throw the wods To the west side betwene the Guset and Richard wods Land but Left out of the Guset & soe downe betwene Abraham Cooles & the Land that was william Elstones

: 11 : To one high way betwene mr Cathentone & the widow haule of six Rod

: 12 : To one high way betwene domeney tarsmaker & John bodine of six rod

: 13 : To one high way by the water side from John bodines to Capten bilopes Land of eight Rod

: 14 : To one high way by the water side begining att mr John Lecounts & soe to the pipe makers and from thence throw the woods to the water side by peter Jonseames his house and from thence by the water side to the Land of John hendriksone

: 15 : To one high way from peter Jonseameses alongst the water side in the frount of mr Stimorles Land & adaham huds & Elishea parbers and soe alongst the water side to the Coper planers

: 16 : To one high way from the koirb of John hendrikesone alongst the water side To Clais Lazeleare

This is atrew Record by the order of the Coarte of seshones

“Entred & Recorded by mee

“JACOB CORBETT : Cla :”





In compliance with a similar order of the court of sessions March 4, 1700, relating to the inhabitants of the north division, the following roads were laid out in that quarter and recorded the 17th day of March, 1700 :

“1 : To one highway along the front of Karels neck Six Rods in breadth & so along royl land where oswald ford liveth

: 2 : To one high way between the Land of Christian Corsson & Segir gerritse running to Coecles Town Six rodd in breadth.”

There is a tradition that the Richmond road is the oldest road on the island, but at what date it was opened we are not informed. Very probably it follows the course of a pre-historic Indian trail. It is said that it was originally laid out eight rods in width. The object of this was to prevent as much as possible the danger of Indians lying in ambush and attacking travellers unawares, by giving a chance for clear vision some distance ahead.

A road from Betty Morgan's house to Dongan's lower mill was closed and another opened in its stead April 8, 1758. The latter ran from the road that connected Karle's neck and Richmond, beginning on that road at a point on John Betty's land, thence past Betty Morgan's house, taking on its way the course of the “gully running to Mr. Totten's Bridge,” and other lines and paths till it reached Colonel Dongan's lower mill.

A road from Darby Doyle's ferry to Billop's ferry, and another from the Narrows or Simonson's ferry to meet the other at the school house of Garrison's were laid out March 14, 1774. A road from the soldiers' lots to John Bodine's was laid out at the same time.

From a publication in London, dated 1760, we abstract the following description of Staten Island at that time :

“Staten Island at its east end has a ferry of three miles to the west end of Long Island ; at its west end is a ferry of one mile to Perth-Amboy of East Jersies ; it is divided from East Jersies by a creek ; is in length about twelve miles, and about six miles broad, and makes one county, called Richmond, which pays scarce one in one and twenty of the provincial tax ; it is all in one parish, but several congregations, viz., an English, Dutch, and French congregation ; the inhabitants are mostly English ; only one considerable village called Cuckold's-town.”

Professor Kalm, a French traveller, made the journey from Philadelphia to New York, by way of Staten Island, on horse-



back in 1748. The party of which he was a member left Philadelphia October 27th, and came by way of Bristol, Trenton, Princeton, New Brunswick, Woodbridge, Elizabethtown and Staten Island. From his accounts of the places on his route we make the following extract.

“ At night we took up our lodgings at *Elizabethtown Point*, an inn about two *English* miles distant from the town, and the last house on this road belonging to New Jersey. The man who had taken the lease of it, together with that of the ferry near it, told us that he paid a hundred and ten pounds of *Pennsylvania* currency to the owner.

“ *October* the 30th. We were ready to proceed on our journey at sun rising. Near the inn where we had passed the night, we were to cross a river, and we were brought over, together with our horses, in a wretched, half rotten ferry. This river came a considerable way out of the country, and small vessels could easily sail up it. This was a great advantage to the inhabitants of the neighboring country, giving them an opportunity of sending their goods to *New York* with great ease; and they even made use of it for trading to the *West Indies*. The country was low on both sides of the river, and consisted of meadows. But there was no other hay to be got, than such as commonly grows in swampy grounds; for as the tide comes up in this river, these low plains were sometimes overflowed when the water was high. The people hereabouts are said to be troubled in summer with immense swarms of gnats or musquitoes, which sting them and their cattle. This was ascribed to the low swampy meadows, on which these insects deposite their eggs, which are afterwards hatched by the heat.

“ As soon as we had got over the river, we were upon *Staten Island*, which is quite surrounded with salt water. This is the beginning of the province of *New York*. Most of the people settled here were *Dutchmen*, or such as came hither whilst the *Dutch* were yet in possession of this place. But at present they were scattered among the *English* and other *European* inhabitants, and spoke *English* for the greatest part. The prospect of the country here is extremely pleasing, as it is not so much intercepted by woods, but offers more cultivated fields to view. Hills and vallies still continued, as usual to change alternately.

“ The farms were near each other. Most of the houses were



wooden ; however, some were built of stone. Near every farm-house was an orchard with apple trees ; the fruit was already for the greatest part gathered. Here, and on the whole journey before, I observed a press for cyder at every farm-house, made in different manners, by which the people had already pressed the juice out of the apples, or were just busied with that work. Some people made use of a wheel made of thick oak planks, which turned upon a wooden axis by means of a horse drawing it, much in the same manner as the people do with woad ; except that here the wheel runs upon planks. Cherry trees stood along the enclosures round corn-fields.

“ The corn fields were excellently situated, and either sown with wheat or rye. They had no ditches on their sides, but (as is usual in *England*) only furrows ; drawn at greater or less distances from each other.

“ In one place we observed a water mill, so situated that when the tide flowed the water ran into a pond ; but when it ebbed the floodgate was drawn up, and the mill driven by the water flowing out of the pond.

“ About eight of the clock in the morning we arrived at the place where we were to cross the water, in order to come to the town of *New York*. We left our horses here and went on board the yacht : we were to go eight *English* miles by sea ; however we landed about eleven o'clock in the morning at *New York*. We saw a kind of wild ducks in immense quantities upon the water : the people called them *Blue bills*, and they seemed to be the same with our Pintail ducks, or *Linnaeus's Anasacula* : but they were very shy.”

Without any especial attempt at order in arrangement or date we shall now review such of the customs and habits of the people of this period as the sources of our information afford us a glimpse of.

In colonial times the people used wooden trenches and pewter platters and other dishes at their meals, the poorer classes using the former and the more wealthy using the latter. They were very fond of pewter mugs and porringers, which were a kind of round bowl with a handle prettily carved, and was used more particularly for drinking chocolate, that beverage being then more common than tea or coffee. Chocolate was the common drink for supper. Coffee and tea were little used, though it is said coffee was introduced here about 1650. When



tea was first introduced here there seems to have been some uncertainty as to what was its most appropriate use. An amusing story is told of one Mr. Crocheron, who, having heard of the new herb called tea, bought a pound of it and took it home. When he wished to boil a ham he thought the aromatic qualities of the tea would improve it, so he strewed his pound of tea over the ham and boiled them all up together. To have her pewter ware scoured clean and bright, and well arranged for display on the shelves of her kitchen was the pride of the industrious housewife. Feather beds were in common use, summer and winter.

The general breakfast of rich and poor was suppaun and milk. Toast and cider was a very common article of diet, the bread being toasted and put into the cider, and sometimes the cider was substituted by chocolate. They often had four meals a day. After the breakfast described above came dinner in the middle of the day, at which a favorite dish was "samp-porridge," a kind of soup made with meat, potatoes, turnips and the like. Between daylight and dark they took a light lunch, with, perhaps, a cup of tea, then had supper about nine o'clock. This consisted of suppaun and milk, or bread and milk, or toast and cider again. Thus it will be noticed that though they had frequent meals their bill of fare was a very plain one and was not remarkable for its variety.

To ride on horseback was a much more common method of travelling than it is now. It was indeed then the most common one in use. A man took his wife and a young man took his girl, on the same horse with himself, the lady riding behind her cavalier. Sometimes a pillion was used, but they generally rode bare-back. Vehicles were very rare, and consisted almost entirely of farm wagons and carts, which were used for purposes of pleasure as well as business. Carpets on the floors were then almost unknown, but the tidy housewife of those times kept the floors of her living rooms well scrubbed, bright and clean, and then sprinkled white sand over them, distributing it in frescoes over the floor by artistic flourishes of the broom.

Shortly before the revolution, tradition asserts that the people were unusually superstitious. A number of stories of witches and strange apparitions are handed down. One tells of a child that was seen at night all clothed in red on a certain rock at Springville which lay across the road from the school house,





but has since been blasted. Another tells us of a mysterious black dog as large as a horse that used to frequent a spot called "the signs," and at night would appear beside horseback riders and trot along with them. One negro who was riding with a broad-axe in his hand, had the boldness to strike a terrific blow, but the dog vanished from beneath it and the axe fell to the ground. Another tells of a negro slave who ran away and a well disposed witch brought him back and placed him in his bed at night. But he was so much exhausted from the rough handling of the witch that he could not get out of bed for three or four days. There were also the "Haunted Woods," on the road to Old Town, and the "Haunted Bridge," on the road to Amboy, each of which had its tale of supernatural mystery. Had the sage of "Sunnyside" pitched his tent for awhile on Staten Island he might have embalmed some of them in the charms of classic literature, where perchance they would have been rivals for "Sleepy Hollow" or "Rip Van Winkle."

In the time of which we are speaking flax was raised here, and linen manufactured from it in the families of the farmers. "Flax bees" were social merry-making occasions on which labor was combined with entertainment. The flax having been properly rotted was "crackled," "hatcheled" and otherwise prepared for the more tedious work of spinning and weaving. After the work of the evening was done girls and boys would join in a dance for a considerable part of the balance of the night. And who shall say that the sturdy youths and ruddy faced girls of that day, in their plain home-spun clothing, after an evening's vigorous toil and surrounded by the rustic appurtenances of the homes in which they were assembled, did not enjoy the sweets of social intercourse just as fully as the beaux and belles of to-day with all the dainty luxuries of modern dress and surroundings.

Nearly all the farmers had slaves in those days. These were uniformly well treated. It was customary for them to live, eat and sleep in the kitchens. After their household duties for the day were accomplished the black women were commonly engaged in spinning linen or twine. The men also would spin with an instrument called a "haspel" the yarn for ropes, to be taken to the rope-walks to be made up.

A list of the names of slaves, male and female, above fourteen years of age owned in the north division of Staten Island



in 1755, is still preserved. We give the list, with the names of their owners, as it appears.

“A List of The Names Male and Female belonging to  
Males. Females.

Thomas Dongan

1st Thomas Tice  
2d Ceaser  
3d Jack  
4th Jack Mollato  
5th Joe  
6th Robbin  
7th Parris

1st Philis  
2 Peg  
3 Hanna

Jacob Corssen Ceneor

1: Japhory  
2: Sam  
3: Jupiter

1: Mary  
2: Nanne

Jacob Corssen Juner

1 Rose  
2: Nans

John Vegte

1: Tom  
2: Primes

1: Bette  
2: Jean

Gerardus Beekman

1 Bristo

1 June

In the Care of G. Beekman and

Belonging to John Beekman in New York.

1: One Negro Na. Sam  
2: One Negro Na. Jo  
3: One Negro Na. Warwick

Antony Watters

1: One Negro Na, Sam  
2: One Negro Na, Will

1: One W Legna  
2: One W Phillis

Henry Cruse

1 One negroNa Charles

1: One W Na lade  
2: One W na Dina  
3: One W na Sary  
1: One W na Dina

Cornelius Cruse

Simon Simonson

1: One Negro Na Napten

Johanis de Groet

1: One negro Na Jack

1: One W. Na Susanna



	Joseph Rolf	
1: One negro Na, sam		1: One W, Na Jude 1: One W, Na Sary
	Cristeiaen Corssen	
1. One Negro Na, Jack		
2: One Negro Na Nenes		
	Josuah Merseral	
1: One Negro Na Flip		1: One W, Na Darkis
	John Deceer	
1: One Negro named Jem		1: One W, Na Jane 1: One W, Na mat 1: One W, Na bet
	Garret Crussen	
	Garrit Post	
1: one Negro Na Bos.		1. One W, Na flore
	John Roll Junr	
1 one, Na Jack		1: One W Na Sary
	Barent marteling	
1. one Na. fortén		
	Richard merrill	
1. one Na Sam one na Bink		One W Na Titie One W Na Sary
	Otto Van tuyl	
1 Negor N harry		1 W Na Jane 2 W, Na Jude
2 Dto N John		
	Bastian Ellis	
1 Negro Tom		
	John Veltmon	
1 Negro Na Quam		
	Abraham Prall	
1 Negro Na Jack		1 Wench Na Hage 2 Dto Na Jane 3 Dto Na Bet
2 Dto Na Tom		
	Charles Mecleen	
1 Negro Na Ben		
	Margret Simonson	
1 Negro Na kos		1 Wench Na floar
	Joseph Lake	
1 Negro Na Kinck		1 Wench Na Peg
	John Roll	
1 Negro Na Tom		1 Wench Na Sary
2 Dto Na Cornelias		
3 Dto Na harry		



	Elenor haughwout	1 Wench Na Bet
	Abraham Crocheron	
1 Negro Na Lue	Barnit De Pue	1 Wench Na Mary
1 Negro Na Tom	John Crocheron	1 Wench febe
1 Negro Na Sambo	David Cannon	1 Wench Na Bet
	Aron Prall	
1 Negro Na harry	Charyty Merrill	
1 Negro Na frank	Joseph Begel	
1 Negro Na Harry	Cornelias Korsan	1 Wench Na Philis
		Wench Na Susanna
" A list of the Negroes of my division in the North Company of Staten Island.		

" JACOB CORSEN Jur "

While we are speaking of slavery the following copy of an advertisement dated July 5, 1756, will throw some light on the customs of the time in regard to the subject:

" Run away the 2d Instant *July*, from *John Decker*, of *Staten Island*, a negro Man, being a short chubby Fellow, with extraordinary bushy Hair, is bare foot, and has a Soldier's red Great Coat on. Also run away from the Widow *Haughwout*, of the said Island, a negro Wench, of middie Size, is with Child, and speaks broken English, and has a Bundle of Clothes with her. It is supposed they went together. Whoever takes up the said negro Man and Wench, and secures them so that they be had again, shall have *Forty Shillings* Reward, and Charges paid by the Owners, *John Decker* and Widow *Haughwout*."

As the life of a slave was doomed to be one of labor, intellectual cultivation was deemed unnecessary; some few, however, were taught sufficiently to enable them to read the Bible, and as they were admitted to be responsible hereafter for the deeds done in this life, religious instructions in pious families were not neglected. It was not unusual to see master and slave working together in the fields apparently on terms of perfect equality, but there were lines drawn, beyond which neither





males nor females dared to trespass. In the kitchen, especially in the long winter evenings, the whites and blacks indiscriminately surrounded the same huge fire, ate apples from the same dish, poured cider from the same pitcher, and cracked nuts and jokes with perfect freedom.

The dwellings of the early settlers were unavoidably rude and more or less uncomfortable and inconvenient. As the society ripened into the Colonial period, however, some improvement was made. At first necessity compelled them to erect their houses without regard to anything but that. Log cabins were built by almost every family, and when properly constructed, were comfortable and durable. They were one story high, with wooden chimnies and thatched roofs. In process of time, as their means increased, many of them erected spacious, and in some instances costly houses of stone, some of which may still be seen in various parts of the island, but they were almost without exception in the Dutch style of architecture—long, low and massive. The kitchen, which was usually a separate structure, but connected with the main house, was furnished with a spacious fire-place—in some instances occupying one entire end of the apartment. It is said that some of these kitchens were furnished with doors, in front and in rear, large enough to allow a horse and sleigh loaded with wood, to be driven in at one door (the wood to be unloaded into the fire-place) and driven out at the opposite, but we will not pledge our historical veracity for the truth of the assertion. Usually a “back-log,” of green wood, too large to be managed without the aid of bars and levers, was rolled into the house and placed against the back wall of the fire-place, then smaller materials were built up in front of it and ignited, and soon a bright and glowing fire was kindled, giving heat, and at night, light enough for ordinary purposes.

The materials for these houses were abundant on almost every man's farm; stones were either quarried or found on the surface; timber grew in his own woods, where it was felled and dressed; shingles were cut and split in the same place, and the boards and planks were sawed at some neighboring mill. Of these saw-mills there were several on the island; the ruins of one or two of them are still to be seen. The nails were made by the hands of the neighboring blacksmith. Lime of the best quality was made by burning the shells, which were found in



many places near the shores in large quantities, deposited there by the aborigines. It required much labor, and occupied much time to build a house of this description, but it was built to be occupied by generations. In the construction of houses of the better class, the chimneys were made of bricks imported from Holland, frequently as ballast, but when it was discovered that an article quite as good could be manufactured from American earth, importation ceased. Ovens were usually built outside of the house, and roofed over to protect them from the weather. The barns were low in the eaves, but very capacious, and some farmers had several of them, according to the size of their farms.

One of the most important of a farmer's out-of-door arrangements was his hog-pen; the number of swine which he fattened annually was proportioned to the number of the members of his family. Beside swine, every farmer fattened a "beef," and when the season for slaughtering came round, which was in the fall, after the weather had become cold, there was a busy time both without and within doors: what with the cutting up and "corning" of the meat, the labor of making sausages, head-cheese, rollitjes, and many other articles, even the names of which are now forgotten, both the males and females of the family were occupied for a fortnight or more. After the work of "killing time" was over, the long fall and winter evenings were devoted to the manufacture of candles, "moulds" and "dips." Every farm had its smoke-house, in which hams, shoulders, pieces of beef, and various other articles of diet, were hung to be cured with smoke. With his corned and smoked meats, his poultry, mutton and veal, the farmer's family was not without animal food the year round. Game of various kinds abounded in the forests for a long time, and was usually hunted by the younger members of the family.

With few exceptions, the people were agriculturists, and their method of cultivation did not differ materially from that of the present day. Their implements of husbandry were usually brought from the old country, and, compared with those of the present day, were clumsy and ponderous. Prior to the introduction of harrows, which is of comparatively recent date, branches of trees were used in their stead.

Every house was furnished with two spinning wheels: a large one, for the manufacture of woolen thread, and a small one for



linen. A thorough, practical knowledge of the use of these instruments was deemed an indispensable part of a young lady's education; let her other accomplishments be what they might, without these she was not qualified to assume the care of a family. After the thread had been spun it was dyed; sumach, the bark of the black oak, chestnut, and other trees furnishing the materials for that purpose. Large families had looms of their own, with which the cloth for family use was woven, though there were professional weavers, whose skill was in demand when bed-spreads and other articles with fancy patterns were required to be made. Girls, at a very early age, were inducted into the mysteries of knitting, and were the recipients of many a boxed ear for "dropping stitches." Provident families were well supplied with woolen and linen garments, and quantities of cloth of both materials laid aside to be manufactured into household articles when they might be required. The prudent housewife made it her care to provide an ample supply of clothing, not only for the living, but she had also laid aside grave clothes for the members of the household to be ready at hand when they might be required.

There were itinerant tailors, who went from house to house, spending several days at each, making overcoats and such other garments as the women of the family could not make; and itinerant shoemakers, who, once each year, went on their circuit, making and repairing boots and shoes.

People sometimes lived at great distances from each other, yet social intercourse was not neglected. On Sundays they met at church, and, both before and after service, family and neighborhood news was communicated and discussed. On court days the men from all parts of the county met at the county seat, where they talked over their agricultural experiences, and other matters of interest. But the most cheerful of all social assemblages, especially for young people, took place in the winter when the sleighing was good; then it was that those who were yet unmarried sought each other's society, and met at Richmond to indulge in the merry dance until the waning hours admonished them to return to their homes. The attractions of these meetings have proved too powerful to be entirely abandoned, and they are still continued by the same class in society.

The early Dutch settlers on Staten Island, though not a



literary, were a pious people ; the greater part of them were able to read and write, as the Dutch family Bibles, and the beautiful chirography in many of them testify. The Waldensian and Huguenot elements which amalgamated with them, served to intensify their religious sentiments; indeed, it could not well be otherwise, for it was to enjoy the peaceful exercise of their religion that these latter had forsaken the homes of their childhood and the graves of their fathers, and cheerfully submitted to the inconveniences and sufferings of a life in the wilderness; religious duties had a claim paramount to all others, and long before they were able to erect churches for themselves, their dwellings were thrown open for the accommodation of their neighbors, when the ministers from the city periodically visited them. The language of Holland was, of course, the first in use. The Huguenots brought their French with them, but as the several nationalities mingled and intermarried, it gradually died out, and the Dutch became the prevailing tongue until after the conquest, when in its turn it succumbed to the language of the conquerors. The Dutch, however, continued to be used in social intercourse and the services of the sanctuary for a long time after the conquest, and less than half a century ago its uncouth accents were still heard in some dwellings.

The Dutch were never addicted to the observance of holidays; Custydt, or Christmas, and Nieuw Jaar, or New Year, were about the only ones of a religious character in which they indulged ; Paas, or Easter was surrendered to the children, and Pingster or Whitsunday to the negroes. Children have not yet resigned their claim to their especial holiday in Dutch communities. Religious services were regularly held on Christmas, and on the first day of the New Year, on which occasion the newly elected church officers were formally inducted into their respective offices, and this ceremony was called "being married to the church."

The following extract from the records shows the process of accomplishing marriage to satisfy the requirements of the law in early times :

"Thes Are to giue notes to whome It may concern that Richard Fathfall (?) and Elisabeth Larans [Lawrence] hath bin Published A Cording to Law

by DANILL STILLWELL  
Oversear

on this 15th day of  
Jenewery 1682





“ The A Bone [above] Mentioned Parsons Ar Mared [married]  
By Me on the 25th day of Jenewery 1682

“ By order

RICHARD STILLWELL Justes  
OBADIAH HULMES Clark.”

It was a common practice for farmers to allow their stock to run at large in the woods and wild pastures. To provide against loss of stock and to avoid disputes in regard to the ownership of animals thus running at large two institutions of the period were brought into requisition. These were “pounds” and “ear-marks.” The first record that we find of the former is the following decree of the Court of Sessions :

September 6, 1720, “ Ordered that a good sufficient publick pound be erected and made at or near the burying place by the Dutch Church in the North precinct ; and Ordered Likewise that there be another pound erected in some convenient place at Smoking point in the West precinct. Whoever will be at the charge of making sd. pounds shall have all profit, accruing by poundage.”

We do not know who built the pounds, or when they were built, or how long they were maintained.

Ear-marks were various slits and cuts in the ears of cattle and sheep, and, perhaps, some other animals that were to be turned loose, by which they could be identified. A description of the peculiar mark of each stock-owner was registered upon the books of the town, and the entry was generally accompanied by a rude illustration of the mark. The following entry is an illustration of the registration :

“ March 30th Annoq Domini 1774

“ Gilbert Tottons ear mark for his cattle & sheep &c is a slit in the end of both ears viz. from the tip end down towards the head & a half moon on the upper part of the right ear.

Entered the day and year above written by

“ PAUL MICHEAU Clk.”

The following figures, showing the population of the island at different times during the Colonial period, are arranged from tables in the documentary history of the province.

Years.	Men.	Women.	Children.	Blacks.	Total.
1698 .....	328	208	118	73	727
1703 .....					505
1712 .....					1279



	<i>White Males.</i>	<i>White Females.</i>		
1723 .....	640	611	255	1506
1731 .....	686	827	304	1817
1737 .....	777	763	349	1889
1746 .....	856	835	382	2073
1749 .....	887	858	409	2154
1756 .....	862	805	465	2132
1771 .....	1150	1103	594	2847

In 1693 the following persons were civil officers of Richmond County :

Ellis Duxbury, Esq., judge of the common Pleas. Abraham Cannor (Cannon), Abraham Lakeman (Lockman), Dennis Theunisse and John Shadwell, justices ; John Stilwell, Esq., sheriff. The militia of the county consisted of two companies of foot, 104 men in all, under the command of Capt. Andrew Cannon.

The following are the names of civil and military officers of the county of Richmond for the year 1739 :

<i>Judges of the Court of Common Pleas.</i>	Jacob Corsen, Colonel.
John Le Conte, Judge.	Christiene Corsen, Lt. Col.
Christian Corsen, 2d Judge.	Thomas Billopp, Major.
Gozen Adrianz, 3d Judge.	
Nicolas Britton, Justice.	<i>North Division.</i>
Richard Stilwell, do.	John Veghte, Captain.
Joseph Bedell, do.	Frederick Berge, Lieutenant.
John Veghte, do.	Jacob Corsen, Jun., Ensign
Rem Vander Beek, do.	<i>South Division.</i>
John Latourette, do.	Cornelius Stoothoff, Captain.
Thomas Billop, do.	Jacob Berge, Lieutenant.
Cornelius Corsen, do.	Aris Rvertse (Ryerss), Ensign.
Joshua Mersereau, do.	<i>West Division.</i>
Abraham Cole, do.	Nathaniel Britton, Captain.
Barent Martling, do.	Marthias Johnson, Lieutenant.
Nicholas Larzelere, Sheriff.	Abraham Maney (Mancee), Ensign.
John Hillyer, Coroner.	<i>The Troop.</i>
Daniel Corsen, Clerk.	Peter Perrin (Perine), Captain.
	Garret Crosse, Lieutenant.
	Wynant Wynants, Cornet.
	Danul Wynants, Qr. Master.



## CHAPTER V.

### THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD—1775 to 1783.

Events Prior to the Declaration of Independence.—The Coming of Howe.—Incursions and Skirmishes.—The Close of the War and the Evacuation of New York and Staten Island.—Incidents of the Revolutionary Period.

**D**URING the period of the revolution Staten Island was the theater of many important events. Located as it is so convenient to the metropolis, it became a favorite spot for the encampments of the British army, and was made the seat of much activity. Owing to this wealth of historic associations we shall be pardoned for devoting liberal space to the notice of this period. The island was not in a condition to defend itself against the incursions of any foe who might approach it with respectable force. As an example of the poverty of its martial strength shortly before the war we submit the following extract from the records :

“January 6. 1770 then the Supervisars Examined into the account of the arms that was bought for the county and Benjamin Semans Esq Brought in the account of What quantity Was in his hands, thair Was in his hands £36—Delivered to Captain Wright 12 guns and 12 hangers and guns With Bagnits to Mr. Broons and one Gun With a bagnit to Cornoral Dongan.”

While the war clouds were gathering and the preliminary steps were being taken in other parts there seems to have been but little stir here in the direction of sustaining the cause of independence. The people were not unanimous in their sentiments, but were probably held in check by nearly an equal division between the cause of the colonists and the cause of the king.

The geographical situation of the island gave a direction to the political sentiments of the people. Commanding the approach to the metropolis and the province, whatever nation possessed it, took advantage of its natural facilities in a mili-



tary point of view. The Dutch had a battery on the heights of the Narrows at one time; the English enlarged the military works at the same important point, and the United States have not failed to improve its advantages. Whoever, then, possessed this important point, before the revolution, to a certain extent might be said to possess, or at least to control the island and the metropolis. Whilst the English held the government of the province, the people naturally imbibed English sentiments; freedom of opinion on political subjects, so far as the nature and character of the government was concerned, was not tolerated. It is not to be wondered at, then, that a people who for more than a century had been taught to believe that it was little short of treason to doubt the divine origin of monarchy, and especially of the English monarchy, should be conscientiously opposed to a change which was calculated to overturn all their most cherished institutions. More than half of the population on the island, at the dawn of the revolution, were either of English birth or descent, and few, perhaps none, entertained the idea that the rebellion could by any possibility succeed, and even among the whigs themselves there were probably thousands who hoped against hope.

Nearly all the descendants of the early Dutch settlers were whigs or patriots, and those of French descent were divided between them and the English. Many of the French having settled here before the conquest of the province by the English, had intermarried with the Dutch, who were then the dominant class, and had imbibed Dutch opinions, manners and customs, and had even fallen into the use of the Dutch language. In some of the families bearing French names and of French descent, at the present day, are to be found family records, such as they are, written in the Dutch language. There was, however, another and more marked difference between the people of the several nationalities than mere political sentiments and opinions; the Dutch were imbued with a deep religious feeling; they were not generally as well educated as the English, but they could read and write, and keep their own accounts; the English had their religion, too, but they were more formal and less earnest and devoted than their neighbors; the French in this, as in other respects, accommodated their religion to that of the class with which they had amalgamated. The whig cause throughout the country was calculated to foster religious





enthusiasm, for, being conscious of their own weakness as compared with the mighty power and resources of Great Britain, they naturally looked to a higher power than that of man to sustain them in what they conscientiously believed to be the cause of right.

In February, 1775, this county was represented in the colonial assembly by Christopher Billop and Benjamin Seaman. When, on the 23d of the month, a motion was before the house "that the sense of this House be taken, on the Necessity of appointing Delegates for this Colony, to meet the Delegates for the other Colonies on this Continent, in General Congress, on the 10th Day of May next," these representatives of Richmond voted in the negative.

That bad blood was being stirred up here and in the immediate vicinity thus early, is shown by the following affray which took place in Elizabethtown about the time of which we have just spoken.

On the 8th of February, about noon, a Staten Island man was approaching the shore at Elizabethtown, when a party of men seized his boat, which was loaded with oysters, and forcibly dragged it up into the street and then distributed the oysters among themselves with an unceremonious and peremptory hand. The cause appears to have been that the owner of the boat was supposed to be one of a party of men from "that ever loyal Island," as a tory paper describes Staten Island, who had assisted in violating the order of congress prohibiting the importation of goods after the first of February of that year. The man was James Johnson, of Richmond county, and he applied to a justice of the peace, who advised him to remain quiet for a few hours until the riotous collection of people who were then in the street had become more cool, which he did, and the result of this caution was the aversion of any further violence. Though this affair was of but small magnitude yet it served as an occasion for "*Reverington's Gazette*," the leading loyal paper of the time in New York, to set forth an exaggerated account of the disorderly and lawless character of the whigs.

The people of the island assembled on the 11th of April following, to take action in regard to sending delegates to the provincial congress which was to convene in New York soon after. The report says that the result was almost unanimously against sending delegates. The whigs must have improved



some later opportunity for gaining a representation, for when the congress convened, on the 22d of May following, we find Richmond county was represented by Paul Micheau, John Journey, Col. Aaron Cortelyou, Richard Conner and Major Richard Lawrence.

The strong tory sentiment on the island made association with the people here undesirable to the people of New Jersey at Elizabethtown. The committee at the latter place had refused to allow commerce between the two places to be carried on. We have seen the result of a disregard of that restriction, in the riot of the preceding February. The committee seem to have relented, however, for on July 17th they passed the following order, Jonathan Hampton, a prominent "rebel" being then chairman.

"The Chairman of this Committee having received a letter from Mr. Richard Lawrence, a Delegate of Richmond county for the Provincial Congress of the colony of New York, informing that the inhabitants of said county had, in general, signed the Association recommended by the Committee of New York. This Committee are therefore of opinion that the inhabitants of said county be restored to their commercial privileges with the inhabitants of this town."

September 1, 1775, David Burger, of New York, sent a letter to the congress complaining that sundry persons in Richmond county had supplied a transport with live stock, and the matter was referred to the members of that county to make inquiry on the subject.

On the 1st of December, 1775, Paul Micheau, one of the deputies from Richmond county in the first provincial congress, addressed a letter to the secretary of the congress, in which he says that he had requested the county committee to convene the people to elect new deputies; that a meeting of the committee had been called, and that only a minority appeared, who for that reason declined to act, and requests congress to write to them and learn their reasons for not convening the people, and concludes by hoping the congress may be able to keep tranquility and good order in the province, and make peace with the mother country. He then gave the names of the committee as follows: Capt. John Kitteltas, Capt. Christian Jacobson, Capt. Cornelius Dussosway, Henry Perine, David Latourette, Esq., Peter Mersereau, John Poillon, Moses Depuy,



Lambert Merrill, John Tysen, Joseph Christopher, George Barbus and David Corsen.

To this communication congress replied the next day in a letter addressed to "John Poillon, John Tysen and Lambert Merrill, of the committee for Richmond County," urging them to elect deputies to represent them without delay, and they added emphatically, "rest assured, gentlemen, that the neighboring colonies will not remain inactive spectators if you show a disposition to depart from the Continental Union." They concluded their letter in these words: "We beg, gentlemen, you will consider this matter with that seriousness which the peace, good order and liberties of your county require."

To this the committee made the following reply:

"RICHMOND COUNTY, Dec'r 15th, 1775.

*Mr. President:*

SIR:—Your favour of 2d Decem'r. we hereby acknowledge came safe to our hand, and with the majority of our committee considered the contents. We, agreeable to your request, have caused by advertisement the freeholders and inhabitants in our county to be convened on this day, in order that their sense might be taken whether they will choose deputies to represent them in a provincial congress or not. Accordingly, a number of the said freeholders and inhabitants did appear: a regular poll was opened, and continued till 6 o'clock: at the conclusion of which it appeared that a majority was, for the present, for sending no deputies. Our former conduct in sending of deputies to represent us in Provincial Congress, was elevated with encouraging hopes of having, ere this, obtained the so much desired point in our view, namely, a reconciliation with Great Britain. But, with anxiety we express it, that the hopes of obtaining so desirable an event, is now almost vanished out of our sight; and, instead of which, we behold with horror, every appearance of destruction, that a war with Great Britain will bring upon us. Under these apprehensions, and in our particular situation, we hope you will view us, and when candidly considered, we trust will furnish you with sufficient reason, for the present, to forbear with us.

"We wish and pray that if yet any hope of reconciliation is



left, that measures might be adopted, if possible, to obtain that desirable end, in wishing of which we conclude ourselves,

Your most obt.

And most humble serv'ts,

JOHN TYSON,  
CHRISTIAN JACOBSON,  
DANIEL CORSEN,  
PETER MERSEREAU,  
JOSEPH CHRISTOPHER,  
LAMBERT MERRILL,  
JOHN POILLON.

To NATH'L WOODHULL,

Prest. of Provl. Congress, New York.

"P. S.—Should the congress think it necessary for further information of the state of our county, they will please to order two of our committee to appear before them for that purpose."

On the 21st, congress passed several resolutions, censuring Richmond county for its delinquency, and resolved that if within fifteen days a list of the names of those who oppose a representation in congress be not sent to that body, the whole county shall be considered delinquent, and entirely put out of the protection of congress, and that intercourse with them shall be interdicted, and that the names of delinquents shall be published in all the newspapers of the colony.

During the recess of the congress, the committee of safety was in session. On the 12th of January, 1776, Richard Lawrence and Christian Jacobson appeared before the committee and represented that the majority of the people of Richmond county were not averse, but friendly to the measures of congress; Lawrence was a member of the committee for Richmond county.

On the 23d of the same month the following letter was received by the committee of safety from the Richmond county committee.

"RICHMOND COUNTY, Jan'y 19, 1776.

"*Gentlemen*—Whereas the committee for this county have caused by advertisement the freeholders to be convened on this day, in order to elect two members to represent this county in Provincial Congress; accordingly a poll was opened for that purpose, without any opposition, at the close of which it appeared by a majority, that Messrs Adrian Banker and Richard





Lawrence was duly elected to represent this county in Provincial Congress until the second Tuesday in May next, which we hope will be agreeable to the rest of that body.

We are, gentlemen,

Your mo. obt. and most humble servts.

CHRISTIAN JACOBSON,  
LAMBERT MERRILL,  
JOHN TYSON,  
PETER MERSEREAU,  
GEORGE BARNES,  
MOSES DUPUY,  
DAVID LATOURETTE,  
DANIEL CORSEN,  
HENRY PERINE,  
JOSEPH CHRISTOPHER.

"To the Committee of Safety on recess  
of the Provincial Congress in New York."

The reputation of Richmond county for its want of sympathy in the cause of the colonies seems to have gained more than a local hearing. It reached the ears of the continental congress, and that body made it the subject of action, as shown by the following extract from the minutes :

"IN CONGRESS, Feb'y 8th, 1776.

"The inhabitants of Richmond county, in the Colony of New York, having refused to send Deputies to represent them in Provincial Convention, and otherwise manifested their enmity and opposition to the system and measures adopted for preserving the liberties of America ; and as a just punishment for their inimical conduct, the inhabitants of that Colony having been prohibited by the Convention from all intercourse and dealings with the inhabitants of the said county ; and this Congress being informed by the Committee of Safety of that Colony, that the freeholders of the said county did afterwards, without any opposition, elect Deputies to represent them in Provincial Convention ; but as the proceedings against them had been submitted to the consideration of Congress, it was apprehended Deputies would not be received until the sense of Congress should be communicated.

"*Resolved*, That it be referred to the said Provincial Convention to take such measures respecting the admission of the Deputies, and revoking the interdict on the inhabitants of the



said county, as they shall judge most expedient, provided that the said Deputies and major part of the inhabitants of said county shall subscribe the association entered into by that Colony.

“ Extract from the minutes.

CHAS. THOMPSON, Sec’y.”

It was then ordered by the provincial congress that the resolution of the continental congress be transmitted to the deputies lately elected by the people of Richmond county.

The congress being apprehensive that General Clinton would attempt to land upon Staten Island for the purpose of making depredations and carrying off live stock, had requested the provincial congress of New Jersey to send Colonel Herd, with his regiment, to the island to prevent it, and lest he might not get there in time, a like request was made to the committee of Elizabethtown. This measure excited the apprehensions of the people of Staten Island, who were suspicious of the errand of Colonel Herd and his regiment. Accordingly, on the 19th of February, the two deputies, Adrian Bancker and Richard Lawrence, hastened to inform the congress that they had subscribed to the association entered into by the colony, and that seven eighths of the people had done so likewise “long since,” and that the coming of Colonel Herd, “with a large body of men, to call the people to account for their inimical conduct,” just then when many of the people were coming into the measures, and the cause gaining ground daily, would have an injurious effect, and they suggest that the stopping of the New Jersey forces would quiet the minds of the people. On the same day congress replied and assured the deputies that Colonel Herd’s errand to the island did not in any manner relate to the people of the county, except to protect their property, and that a counter request had been forwarded to New Jersey. The two deputies were requested to attend the congress and to bring with them the proof that the majority of the people had subscribed to the association, to enable them to take their seats.

The committee of Elizabethtown had caused the apprehension and imprisonment at that place, of Isaac Decker, Abraham Harris and Minne Burger, and had held Richard Conner, Esq., under bonds to appear before them, upon charges not specified. The congress of New York entered into a correspondence with the committee of that place, and requested them to send the



delinquents to the county where they belonged, to be tried by the county committee. The committee of Richmond were also informed of the action of the congress, and were instructed to try the delinquents and mete out to them impartial justice, and report to congress. On the 23d of February, Mr. Adrian Bancker's name appears among those of the members of the congress. On the 28th of February, Decker and Burger were returned to their own county, and the charges against them and Richard Conner were also transmitted to the committee of Richmond. Nothing is said of Harris.

The committee of Elizabethtown, at the time of surrendering them, disclaimed all knowledge of their offenses, but intimated that they had been arrested by Colonel Herd, at the instance of either the New York or the continental congress.

The proposed expedition of Colonel Herd to Staten Island to protect the live stock there, originated with General Lee. Having communicated his apprehensions to the committee of safety, that body, on the 10th of February, 1776, addressed a letter to the provincial congress of New Jersey, in which they say: "The entrance of Genl. Clinton into our port on pretence of *merely* paying a visit to Govr. Tryon, though he has been followed by a transport with troops, which we have good reason to believe are only a part of 600 that embarked with him at Boston, renders it highly probable that some lodgement of troops was intended to be made in or near this city;" and as no troops from New York could be spared from its defense, and as Colonel Herd's regiment was so near Staten Island, General Lee deemed it proper that he should be sent over for its protection. The next day the committee addressed another letter to the same convention, informing them that the "*Mercury*," ship of war, with two transports under her convoy, had left the port, and anchored near Staten Island, and expressed their fears that the Colonel would arrive too late. In reply, the New Jersey congress informed the committee on the 12th that Colonel Herd, with seven hundred men, had been ordered to march immediately to Staten Island. On the 17th, congress expressed their thanks to Colonel Herd for his alacrity in their service, but as the danger had now passed (probably by the departure of the ships) his services would not be required.

On the 8th of March, Hendric Garrison, of Richmond county, forwarded a complaint to the congress, that while he was attend-



ing as a witness before the committee of said county, and while under examination, the said committee permitted the defendants, Cornelius Martino, Richard Conner and John Burbank, to insult and abuse him, and he asked the protection of congress, as he considered his person and property unsafe. Lord Stirling, as commander of the continental troops in New York, issued a warrant to apprehend John James Boyd, of Richmond county, and to have him brought before the congress. Captain John Warner, to whom the warrant was delivered for execution, laid it before that body on the 14th of March, when it was considered and decided that the said Boyd was so unimportant and insignificant a person as not to deserve the trouble and expense of apprehending him. Boyd resented this depreciation of his importance, and on the 21st sent a note to the committee of safety claiming to be "a steady and warm friend to his country," and pronounced any accusation against him unfounded.

On the 1st of April, 1776, Christian Jacobson, as the chairman of the county committee, reported the organization of four companies of militia in the county, the officers of which were ordered to be duly commissioned. On the 3d of April Mr. Lawrence, a member from Richmond, reported that the county was already furnished with fourteen good flats or scows, which were sufficient for the removal of the stock from the island, and that the building of two more, as previously ordered, would be a useless expense. These scows, or flats, were held in readiness to remove the cattle to New Jersey, if the English ships of war on the coast should attempt to seize them, as they had done in several other places.

On the 12th of April, Lord Stirling informed the committee of safety that he had General Putnam's orders to march with a brigade of troops for Staten Island, and that he would be under the necessity of quartering the soldiers in the farm-houses for the present; he requests the people to be notified of the fact, so that they might prepare quarters most convenient to themselves, and to be assured that he would make the residence of the troops as little burdensome as possible. The committee of Richmond wererequested to prepare empty farm-houses, barns, etc., for the reception of the soldiers, and to use their "influence with the inhabitants to consider the soldiers as their countrymen and fellow citizens employed in the defence of the liberties of their country in general, and of the inhabitants of Richmond





county in particular, and, endeavour to accommodate them accordingly."

The question has been raised as to whether or not General Washington was ever on Staten Island in person. To this question Mr. Clute, the historian of Staten Island, has suggested the following considerations :

"The only evidence of the fact which is attainable at this day is contained in the extract from his carefully kept accounts with the government of the United States, which we here present.

" 1776.

Ap<sup>l</sup> 25th, To the Exps of myself and party recet<sup>d</sup>

the sev<sup>l</sup> landing places on Staten Island . . . . £16 10 0."

"It may be said that the reconnoitering, which is almost unintelligibly abbreviated in the original account, might have been done on the water, and quite as efficiently as on the land. The following objections, however, exist to this view of the subject :

"*First*.—The object of Washington was to erect fortifications and other defences on the most eligible sites, as the British did when they took possession on the following July ; and some parts of the shores—perhaps the most important—could not be examined with such an object in view, from any position attainable on the water.

"*Second*.—The Commander-in-Chief expresses himself in the above extracts, in terms similar to those used in other parts of his accounts for similar services in places not accessible by water, and

"*Third*.—There were two or three British vessels of-war lying near the Island, on one of which Governor Tryon had taken up his quarters, and from which he kept up an intercourse with royalists on the Island, and a reconnoitering of the shores by water would not have been permitted, to say nothing of the danger of capture."

Whether he came here and travelled over the land himself or not, certain it was that General Washington had his attention drawn to this spot, and regarded Staten Island with more than ordinary concern. There were two points of importance which called for his attention ; the sentiments of the people, and the peculiar geographical position of the island. The action of congress having somewhat modified the former, it was to the latter that he gave most of his care.

Lying between the ocean and the metropolis, and on the high-



way from the one to the other, Staten Island, early in the war, was regarded as an important location in a military point of view. Its importance was enhanced by the fact that it was situated in a bay more than half surrounded by the main land of New Jersey, and commanded not only a great part of Long Island but New York city, and a large extent of country embracing nearly all the northern part of New Jersey; the possession of it therefore became a matter of importance to both belligerents. Washington was as prompt to perceive the natural advantages of Staten Island in a military point of view as were the British. Within a week after his personal visit to the city, he established a look-out at the Narrows, which, when the British made their appearance, sent a message by express that forty of the enemy's vessels were in sight. This information was at once forwarded to the several posts on the Hudson, with instructions to prepare to give them a warm reception if they should attempt to ascend the river. But the ships, upon their arrival, anchored off Staten Island, and landed their troops, and the hillsides were soon covered with their white tents. Military works were at once erected upon every available point, thus intimating their intention of taking a permanent possession.

The opinion which Washington had formed of the people of Staten Island, as well as of their immediate neighbors at Amboy, may be learned from the following extract from one of his letters: "The known disaffection of the people of Amboy, and the treachery of those of Staten Island, who, after the fairest professions, have shown themselves our inveterate enemies, have induced me to give directions that all persons of known enmity and doubtful character should be removed from these places."

On the 2d of May, Mr. Garrison (Hendric), chairman of the county committee, was present at the meeting of the committee of safety, and inquired whether the people would be paid for fire-wood furnished to the troops in Richmond county, and for their labor in preparing the guard house, at the request of Lord Stirling, and was referred to Colonel Mifflin. Hence, we infer that some of Lord Stirling's troops had taken up their quarters on the island.

On the 6th of May, General Washington wrote to the committee of safety, informing them that Peter Poillon, of Rich-



mond county, had been arrested for supplying the king's ships with provisions. On the 8th, Poillon was brought before the committee and examined. He did not deny the charge, but pleaded in extenuation that the regulations for preventing intercourse with the king's ships had not been published in Richmond county until the 2d or 3d of that month, and that therefore he was ignorant of them; he stated farther, that he left home with a considerable sum of money to discharge a debt in Kings county, together with some articles of provision for New York market of the value of about three pounds; that while passing the ship of war "Asia," at as great a distance as he safely could, he was fired at and could not escape; he proved further, by reputable witnesses, that he was a respectable man, and had always been esteemed a friend to the liberties of his country. He was discharged with a caution hereafter to keep at a safe distance from the king's ship, and to warn his fellow citizens of Richmond county to do the same.

May 18th 1776, a certificate signed by Christian Jacobson, chairman of the Richmond county committee, dated April 22d, 1776, was presented to the provincial congress, and attested by Israel D. Bedell, clerk, and directed to Paul Micheau, Richard Conner, Aaron Cortelyou and John Journey, was read and filed, whereby it appeared that these gentlemen had been elected to represent Richmond county in that body, with power to any two of them to meet to constitute a quorum, the second Tuesday of May, 1777.

On the 5th of June, 1776, congress issued an order for the arrest of a number of persons in several counties who were inimical to the cause of America; those from Richmond county were Isaac Decker, Abm. Harris, Ephm. Taylor and Minne Burger. They also ordered that several persons who held office under the king should be summoned to appear before the congress, and among them are found the names of Benjamin Seaman and Christopher Billop, of Richmond.

There is nothing in the "Journal of the Congress" to show that these orders and resolutions were ever carried into effect.

During the early part of the year 1776 the popular feeling in the colonies had become so much aroused that the officers of the king were obliged in many cases to use considerable caution in order to save their own persons from violence. William Tryon, the last of the royal governors, had indeed retired from the city



of New York, and taken his position on board the ship "Halifax," during the previous autumn, and there he wrote to Mayor Whitehead Hicks, of New York, October 19, as follows:

"SIR,

"Finding your letter of yesterday insufficient for the security I requested from the Corporation and Citizens, and objectionable for the mode in which you obtained the sense of the inhabitants, my duty directed me for the present instant to remove on board this ship; where I shall be ready to do such business of the country, as the situation of the times will permit. The citizens, as well as the inhabitants of the province, may be assured of my inclination to embrace every means in my power to restore the peace, good order, and authority of government.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

WILLIAM TRYON."

In January, 1776, General Clinton having been sent by Howe on an expedition along the Atlantic coast, while on his way from Boston to Virginia, came to anchor at Sandy Hook and had an interview with Tryon and other friends of the king who had been obliged to take shelter in vessels, after which they went on their way southward. Howe, with his army, about 12,000 strong, evacuated Boston March 17th, and falling back to Halifax awaited with the fleet the arrival of his brother with reinforcements from England. Becoming impatient of delay he made ready and sailed from that place for the expected seat of war at New York on the 12th of June, and arrived off Sandy Hook on the 25th. Here he waited for the arrival of the fleet, which came up on the 29th. Admiral Lord Howe, with part of the reinforcements from England, arrived at Halifax soon after his brother's departure, but without dropping anchor he followed and joined him here. The British general, on his approach, found every part of New York island, and the most exposed parts of Long Island fortified and well defended by artillery. Finding Staten Island had not been so well fortified for protection the fleet anchored near here and it was determined to make use of this spot for a rendezvous while awaiting the arrival of other forces and the completion of arrangements for penetrating into the country and maturing any other plans for action.





On the 3d of July the fleet moved up to the Narrows, and the grenadiers and light infantry were landed under cover of the frigates and sloops of war. General Howe declared this was done "to the great joy of a most loyal people, long suffering on that account under the oppression of the rebels stationed among them, who precipitately fled on the approach of the shipping." The remainder of the army were landed in the course of the day, and the whole were distributed in cantonments, where they found the best refreshments. The headquarters were at Richmond. The landing of the troops was made in a very orderly manner, under the direction of Captains Raynor, of the ship "Chatham," and Curtis, of the ship "Senegal," and to the entire satisfaction of General Howe. As the Americans were strongly posted and in great force, both on Long Island and at New York, having upwards of a hundred cannon for defending the city, Howe resolved to defer his scheme of ascending the North river, and to remain in his present position until he should be joined by Clinton and the expected reinforcements from England. The latter arrived at Staten Island on the 12th of July, and Lord Howe assumed the command of the fleet on the American station. The fleet numbered one hundred and thirteen sail and they lay in a line extending from the mouth of the Kill von Kull to Simonson's ferry at the Narrows. As they were coming in, the "Asia," which brought up the rear of the fleet, was fired at from a small battery on Long Island commanding the Narrows. The fire was returned by about forty 24-pounders, one of which lodged in the wall of a private house there. Another shot struck the house of Mr. Denysé Denyse afterward of Staten Island, wounding a negro servant in the foot and narrowly missing the kitchen, where a number of the family were at work. A second shot struck the barn on the same place, and a third destroyed much of the garden fence opposite the front door of the mansion house. This is said to have been the first blood shed in this quarter in the war.

The following items from the "*Pennsylvania Journal*" of July 10, 1776, are of interest in this connection.

"As soon as the troops landed they paraded the North Shore, and on Wednesday morning made their appearance near Elizabeth-Town Point; but the country being soon alarmed, they retreated, took up the floor of the draw-bridge in the salt meadows, and immediately threw up some works.



"Their near approach to Elizabeth-Town Point greatly alarmed the inhabitants of Essex county, and particularly the people of Elizabeth-Town and Newark, but they are now in a condition to receive them whenever they may think proper to approach.

"Two young men from Elizabeth-Town crossed the river in a canoe last Thursday, and fired upon the Regulars; but a number of them rushing out of the woods, they were obliged to retreat and cross the river again.

"A sloop of twelve six pounders, belonging to the fleet from Halifax, laying in the Kills, near Mr. Decker's ferry, was almost torn to pieces last Wednesday morning, by a party under the command of General Herd, from the opposite shore, with two 18-pounders. The crew soon abandoned the sloop, and we suppose she is rendered entirely unfit for any further service.

"We hear two men of war now lay near Amboy, in order 'tis supposed, to stop all navigation that way."

Lord Howe and General Howe, having thus established their troops and naval forces upon and around Staten Island, issued a proclamation on the 14th of July, inviting all persons to return to their allegiance to the king. Their combined forces were estimated at about 24,000 men, though only a part of them were encamped on the island. The number of the latter has been variously estimated at from nine to fifteen thousand men.

Let us now turn aside from the field of active movements to notice the deliberations of the parliamentary head of government. On the 9th of July the provincial congress convened at the court house in White Plains, Westchester county; the British then having taken possession of Staten Island, there were no deputies from Richmond county in attendance. At this meeting the declaration of independence was received and read; it was also reported that the British had taken possession of Staten Island without opposition, and detachments had advanced toward Bergen Point and Elizabethtown. The declaration having been read, it was *unanimously* adopted, and the congress passed a resolution to support the same, "at the risk of our lives and fortunes." It was thus ordered to be published. It was then "Resolved and Ordered, that the style or title of this house be changed from that of the 'Provincial Congress of the Colony of New York,' to that of 'The Convention of the Representatives of the State of New York.'"



The convention recognized the impracticability of electing senators and members of assembly in the southern district of the state, Westchester excepted, and as it was reasonable and right that the people of that district should be entitled to representation in legislation, they proceeded to appoint these officers; and for the county of Richmond, Joshua Mersereau and Abm. Jones were appointed; the latter was subsequently denied his seat, on account of his sympathy for the enemy.

After this the county does not appear to have been represented in the legislature of the colony or state for a long time. There were representatives who were entitled to their seats, but they were not permitted to leave the island. Communication with the main land, or with New York, or Long Island, was prohibited, except by permission, and consequently in the succeeding sessions of the legislature the name of a representative from Richmond does not appear.

The first object to engage the attention of General Howe was the conciliation of the American loyalists, and, to this end, he had numerous interviews with Governor Tryon and other prominent individuals in New York and New Jersey, all of whom led him to believe that large numbers of the people were anxious to flock to his standard the moment it was unfurled. Delancey, of New York, and Skinner, of Perth Amboy, were made brigadier-generals, and Billop, of Staten Island, colonel, of the native loyalists or tories. Proclamations were issued promising protection to the people so long as they remained peaceably at home and manifested no sympathy for the rebels or their cause. Misled by the specious promises which Howe had promulgated, hundreds of the whig inhabitants of Staten Island remained peaceably at home to reap the fruits of their credulity in having soldiers quartered upon them—in enduring, submissively, the insults and outrages committed upon themselves and families, their houses and barns openly and defiantly plundered, their cattle driven away or wantonly killed, their churches burned, and, not infrequently, some of their own number barbarously, and without provocation, murdered.

There were some, however, who had no faith in the protestations of the British commander, and also had too much manhood to conceal their sentiments; to these the political atmosphere of the island was decidedly unhealthy, and they had to



escape for their lives. Among them was Colonel Jacob Mersereau. He was the son of Joshua Mersereau and Maria Corsen. He was baptized May 24th, 1730, and died in September, 1804, in the 75th year of his age. He resided in the old stone house in Northfield, not far from Graniteville, since occupied by his son, Hon. Peter Mersereau. Soon after the beginning of the war he became apprehensive for his personal safety and fled to New Jersey. During his protracted residence there, he made occasional stealthy visits to his family by night, and on one of these occasions had a very narrow escape from capture. Having crossed the sound, and concealed his boat, he took his course for home across fields, avoiding the public roads as much as possible. While crossing a road he was met by a young man by whom he was recognized at once. There was no British post just then nearer than Richmond, and thither the young tory hastened to inform the commanding officer of his discovery. Preparations were made immediately to effect the arrest of the colonel, but it was near daylight in the morning before the party set out. The family had arisen early, but they did not discover the soldiers until they were within a few rods of the house. The alarm was immediately given, which, being perceived by the approaching party, a rush was made, and as they reached the door the colonel sprang out of the upper northwest window of the house upon a shed beneath it, and thence to the ground. He was discovered before he had gone far, and at once pursued. Crouching on "all-fours" behind a hedge to keep himself out of sight, he reached a swamp in the middle of which he found a place of concealment. The swamp was discovered, and it was at once concluded that he was there concealed, but as the pursuers were ignorant of its intricacies, they could proceed no further. Dogs were then put on the track, which they followed to the edge of the swamp, where they chanced to scent a rabbit, and away they went in pursuit of the new game. Here the pursuit terminated, and the colonel, after remaining concealed the whole day, escaped during the following night to New Jersey. For a week thereafter a close watch was kept on the house by day and by night.

When the British took possession of Staten Island, they immediately threw up strong intrenchments. Simcoe says:

"In the distribution of quarters for the remaining winter, Richmond was allotted to the Queen's Rangers. This post was





in the center of the island, and consisted of three bad redoubts, so contracted, at various times and in such a manner, as to be of little mutual assistance; the spaces between these redoubts had been occupied by the huts of the troops, wretchedly made of mud;" these Lieut. Col. Simcoe had thrown down, and his purpose was to build ranges of log houses, which might join the redoubts, and being loop-holed, might become a very defensible curtain. Other fortifications were erected in other parts of the island—one at New Brighton, on the height now known as Fort Hill, which commanded the entrance to the Kills; another was built at the Narrows, near the site of the present national fortifications, and in several other places. Many remnants of British occupancy have been found in and around these old fortifications, such as cannon balls, bullets, gun locks, etc.

Skirmishing between the forces on Staten Island and the Americans on the Jersey shore was of frequent occurrence. A considerable cannonading took place between the forces at Perth Amboy and batteries of the British on the Staten Island shore on the 25th of July. This was occasioned by the firing of the former upon four or five shallops as they were coming down the sound. The account continues:

"Captain Moulder, with his two field pieces, was ordered to the shore (Perth Amboy), but being encamped at some distance, before he could come up the shallops had all nearly past, however, he began a well directed fire, and though they had got to a considerable distance, hulled one of them.

"When the vessels were past, the firing ceased on both sides. We had the misfortune of losing one of the Second battalion, and having another wounded. \* \* \* \* There was a horse killed which was standing in a waggon near the General's door. The enemy appear to have some very heavy field pieces. They sent some 12-pounders among us. It is surprising they did not do more execution, as there were so many of our people on the bank opposite to them without the least covering.

"The enemy appear to be very strong, and are constantly reinforcing, as our troops come in. They are throwing up breast-works along the shore to prevent our landing."

Major Turner Staubenzee was commander of the Second battalion of light infantry on the island. He employed a stout negro, who happened to fall into his hands, to carry a note to



another officer. The negro on his way decided to change his course and, turning aside, escaped beyond the lines, and fled to the city, where he delivered the note to the Americans. It ran as follows.

*“Dear Stanton:*

“The bearer I have sent you, thinking him a strong able fellow, and fit to cut throats; so if you approve him, keep him in your corps.

“Yours, &c.

“T. STAUBENZEE.”

By the end of July the American posts opposite the island were well secured. Above five thousand troops were distributed at the different stations from Newark bay down the sound to South Amboy, while the headquarters were at Amboy city, the strongest point of the line. The strength of the British was unknown to them, but believed to be about ten thousand. The latter had sentinels all along the shore of the island on the north and west sides, and the houses and barns of the inhabitants were occupied by the troops. It was also supposed that a considerable encampment was established behind the low bluff at Tortenville, and one account of the engagement on the 25th says that “in less than half an hour after our fire on the shallows began, a large body were seen coming over that hill.” The British evidently were ignorant of the numbers of the Americans on the opposite shore, and regarded it as necessary to fortify against an expected attack from the forces which in reality were not more than one third the strength of their own. They had concealed guns—six, eight and twelve pounders—planted along the shore in different places.

The waters of the lower bay presented a scene of considerable activity at that time, from the frequent going out and returning of men-of-war and transports belonging to the fleet which occupied the inner bay. Additional numbers of vessels joined the fleet at different times, and transports were bringing provisions and supplies.

The capture of the city of New York was the immediately desirable thing to General Howe, and an attack upon some other point, by which a flank movement could be effected, and the city approached by more accessible means than a direct attack, was expected. Long Island and the Jersey shore both stood in suspense, ready to take alarm at the first movements of the



British in either direction. About the 8th of August deserters from the fleet carried the news to the Americans that Howe was taking his field pieces on board and preparing for an attack by land and water simultaneously upon Long Island and the city. On the other side the people of Elizabethtown were about the same time aroused by an alarm that the regulars were about to make an immediate attack upon that point. Every man capable of bearing arms was summoned to defend it. As three or four young men were going out from one family, an elderly lady, their mother or grandmother, after assisting them to arm, said to them: "My children, you are going out in a just cause—to fight for the rights and liberties of your country; you have my blessing and prayers, that God will protect and assist you, but if you fall, His will be done. Let me beg of you, my children, that if you fall, it may be like men, and that your wounds may not be in your back parts." These alarms, however, appear to have been without important results until the latter part of the month.

In the meantime the forces of Howe were strengthened by the arrival at Staten Island of the fleet which returned from South Carolina under Clinton and Cornwallis in the early part of the month, and the first and second divisions of foreign troops which arrived in the Lower bay on the 12th. The fleet which brought the latter numbered about one hundred and ten sail of vessels, on board of which were eight thousand Hessians and Waldeckers and a few English guards. These were sent into camp on Staten Island. Estimates of the numbers on Staten Island at this time make them to be about twenty-two thousand men. The naval forces were accommodated on board the ships "Asia" and "Eagle," each carrying sixty-four guns, and the "Roebuck" and "Phoenix," of forty-four guns each, about twenty frigates and sloops of war and above three hundred sail of transports, store ships and prizes.

The state of affairs on the eve of the decisive battle of Long Island is told more effectively in the following extract than we could otherwise tell it. The extract is from a letter written at New York, August 22, 1776:

"This night we have reason to expect the grand attack from our barbarous enemies, the reasons why, follow. The night before last, a lad went over to Staten Island, supped there with a friend and got safe back again undiscovered, soon after he went



to General Washington and upon good authority reported,—That the English army amounting to fifteen or twenty thousand, had embarked, and were in readiness for an engagement—That seven ships of the line, and a number of other vessels of war were to surround this city and cover their landing,—That the Hessians being 15,000 were to remain on the island and attack Perth-Amboy, Elizabeth-town point, and Bergen, while the main body were doing their best here; that the Highlanders expected America was already conquered, and that they were only to come over and settle on our lands, for which reason they had brought their churns, ploughs, &c. being deceived, they had refused fighting, upon which account General Howe had shot one, hung five or six, and flogged many.

“Last evening in a violent thunder-storm, Mr. ——— (a very intelligent person) ventured over, he brings much the same account as the above lad, with this addition,—That all the horses on the island, were by Howe’s orders killed, barrell’d up and put on board; the wretches thinking that they could get no landing here and of consequence be soon out of provision. That the tories were used cruelly, and with the Highlanders were compelled to go on board the ships to fight in the character of common soldiers against us. The British army are prodigiously incensed against the tories, and curse them as the instruments of the war now raging. Mr. ——— further informs, that last night the fleet was to come up, but the thunder storm prevented. The truth of this appears, from the circumstance of about three thousand red coats landing at ten o’clock this morning on Long Island, where by this time it is supposed our people are hard at it. There is an abundance of smok to-day on Long Island, our folks having set fire to stacks of hay, &c., to prevent the enemy’s being benefited in case they get any advantage against us. All the troops in the city are in high spirits and have been under arms most of the day, as the fleet have been in motion, and are now, as is generally thought, only waiting for a change of tide.—Forty-eight hours or less, I believe, will determine it as to New York, one way or the other.”

The state of the British army on Staten Island at this time is shown by the following list, from an English authority :

*Commander in Chief*, General the Honourable Sir William Howe, K. B.; *Second in Command*, Lieutenant-General Henry





Clinton; *Third in Command*, Right Honorable Lieutenant-General Earl Percy.

*1st Brigade.*--Major-General Pigot; 4th Regiment, Major James Ogilvie; 15th Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Bird; 27th Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel J. Maxwell; 45th Regiment, Major Saxton.

*2d Brigade.*--Brigadier-General Agnew; 5th Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Wolcot; 28th Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Rob. Prescott; 35th Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Carr; 49th Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Henry Calder, Bart.

*3d Brigade.*--Major-General Jones; 10th Regiment, Major Vatass; 37th Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Abercromby; 38th Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Wm. Butler; 52d Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Mungo Campbell.

*4th Brigade.*--Major-General James Grant; 17th Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Manhood; 40th Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel James Grant; 46th Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Enoch Markham; 55th Regiment, Captain Luke.

*5th Brigade.*--Brigadier-General Smith; 23d Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel J. Campbell; 43d Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel George Clerke; 14th Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Alured Clarke; 63d Regiment, Major Francis Sill.

*6th Brigade.*--Brigadier-General Gen. Robertson; 23d Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Benj. Bernard; 44th Regiment, Major Feury Hope; 57th Regiment, Lieutenant John Campbell; 64th Regiment, Major Hugh McLeroch.

*7th Brigade.*--Brigadier-General Wm. Erskine, quarter-master general; 17th Light Dragoons, Lieutenant-Colonel Birch; 71st Highlanders, 1st Battalion, Major John Macdowell; 2d Battalion, Major Norman Lamont.

*Brigade of Guards.*--Major-General Matthew; Light Infantry Brigade, Brigadier-General Honorable Alexander Leslie; 1st Battalion Light Infantry, Major Thomas Musgrave; 2d Battalion Light Infantry, Major Straubenzie; 3d Battalion Light Infantry, Major Honorable John Maitland; 4th Battalion Light Infantry, Major John Johnson.

*Reserve.*--Right Honorable Lieutenant-General Earl of Cornwallis; Brigadier-General the Honorable John Vaughan; 33d Regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Webster; 42d Regiment (Royal Highland), Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Stirling; 1st Battalion Grenadiers, Lieutenant-Colonel Honorable Henry Monckton;



2d Battalion Grenadiers, Lieutenant-Colonel William Meadows; 3d Battalion Grenadiers, Major Thomas Marsh; 4th Highland Grenadiers, Major Charles Stuart; Royal Artillery and Engineers, Brigadier-General Cleveland.

General Howe having signified to the admiral that it was his intention to make a descent in Gravesend bay on Long Island, on the morning of the 22d the necessary dispositions of the fleet were made, and seventy-five flat boats, with eleven batteaux and two galleys (built for this service) were prepared for landing the troops. Howe delegated the direction and superintendence of the embarkation of the army from Staten Island entirely to Commodore Hotham, by whom it was conducted with the greatest dispatch and good conduct. In the afternoon of the 21st the troops who were to compose the second and third debarkations were put on board transports which had been sent up from the Hook to Staten Island for that purpose. Early in the morning of the 22d the "Phoenix," "Rose," and "Greyhound," frigates, commanded by Captains Parker, Wallace and Dickson, together with the "Thunder" and "Carcass," bombs, under the direction of Colonel James, were placed in Gravesend bay, to cover the landing of the army.

As soon as the covering ships had taken their respective stations, the first embarkation of the troops from Staten Island commenced. These, consisting of the light infantry and the reserve, both forming a body of four thousand men, and under the command of General Clinton, made good their landing without opposition. The transports with the brigades which composed the second debarkation, consisting of about five thousand men, moved at a little distance after the flat-boats, galleys and batteaux, and by eight o'clock were ranged on the outside of the covering ships. The transports, with the remainder of the troops, followed in close succession, and before noon fifteen thousand men and forty pieces of cannon were landed on Long Island.

On the 25th Howe ordered General de Heister with two brigades of Hessians from Staten Island to join the army; leaving one brigade of his troops, a detachment of the Fourteenth regiment of foot from Virginia, and some convalescents and recruits, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Dalrymple to take care of Staten Island. The landing of the troops on Long Island was effected without opposition. There is no need of re-



capitulating the story of the battle and its unfortunate result they are well known ; the British succeeded in gaining possession of New York, which was their main object. To keep possession after having obtained it, required a strong force, and, in consequence, the greater part of the British forces on the island were withdrawn ; enough, however, were left to defend it against any force the Americans might be able to bring against it. The result of the battle, on the whole, was beneficial to the people of Staten Island, as it left fewer soldiers there to deplete upon them, and rob them of their substance.

Howe, who was undoubtedly sincere in his oft-expressed desire for peace, sent General Sullivan, who had been taken prisoner at the battle, with a verbal message to congress, requesting that body to appoint some of its members in a private capacity, to meet him for the purpose of adopting such measures as might be agreed upon for the restoration of peace in the country, intimating that he was clothed with sufficient power for that purpose. By the same messenger congress returned answer that they could not send any of their number, except in their official capacities as members of their body, and a committee of that character they would send for the purpose expressed in the message. Accordingly, on the 6th of September, Benjamin Franklin, of Pennsylvania, John Adams, of Massachusetts, and Edward Rutledge, of South Carolina, were appointed as such committee. On the 14th they met Howe on Staten Island ; the interview took place in the "Old Billop House," still standing. It had been occupied as a barrack for soldiers, and was in an exceedingly filthy condition ; but one room had been cleaned and purified, and furniture placed therein, for the purpose of the meeting. Howe met the committee in a courteous manner, and at once proceeded to explain the nature of the power with which he had been invested, which was simply to extend the royal clemency and full pardon to all repentant rebels who would lay down their arms and return to their allegiance. The committee informed him that they were not authorized to entertain any propositions which did not recognize the political independence of the colonies. Howe replied that he had a great regard for the Americans as a people, but that recognition of their independence was a matter beyond his authority, and could not for a moment be entertained, and that their precipitancy was painful to him and



perilous to themselves. Franklin answered that the people of America would endeavor to take good care of themselves, and thus alleviate as much as possible the pain his lordship might feel in consequence of any severities he might deem it his duty to adopt. This terminated the brief interview, and the committee rose to depart. Howe politely accompanied them to the shore, the party walking, both in coming and returning, between long lines of grenadiers, who, to use the language of Mr. Adams, "looked as fierce as ten furies, and making all the grimaces and gestures, and motions of their muskets, with bayonets fixed, which, I suppose, military etiquette requires, but which we neither understood nor regarded." On the way down, his lordship again expressed his regret that he was unable to regard them as public characters, to which Mr. Adams replied, "your lordship may consider me in what light you please, and indeed, I should be willing to consider myself for a few moments in any character which would be agreeable to your lordship, except that of a British subject." To this Howe replied, "Mr. Adams appears to be a decided character."

The consequence of this exhibition of Mr. Adam's independent and fearless spirit was subsequently apparent, when the list of unpardonable rebels was published, prominent among which was the name of John Adams. It must have been humiliating in the extreme to the pride and arrogance of the British government to be obliged to receive this proscribed rebel as the first minister plenipotentiary of the new government of the United States of America. The remark of Mr. Adams did not prevent Lord Howe continuing his courtesy, for he sent them over to Perth Amboy in his own barge.

After the failure of the interview above described, Howe determined to effect a landing at Kipp's bay, and accordingly sent five frigates from the Staten Island fleet to that point. On the evening of September 13th they passed up the East river, where by keeping close to the Long Island shore they were able to endure without serious damage the constant fire of the Americans from the fortifications on the New York side. Three battalions of Hessians were also sent from the encampment here to take part in that expedition, the particulars of which belong to other pages of history than these.

The British affected to believe that it was the desire of Washington to obtain possession of the post at Richmond,





though what peculiar value either he or they attached to it in a military point of view, except that it commanded one of the entrances to the island through the Fresh kills, is not apparent. To give the rebels, as well as his own semi-barbarous Hessians, employment, Knyphausen sent out frequent expeditions from the island into the Jerseys, where the most horrid atrocities were sometimes committed.

These were not usually sent forth on their errands of robbery and murder, unless they were known to be much superior in number to the patriots, who were likely to meet and oppose them, or had some other important advantage. These predatory excursions, however, were not confined to the British; the Americans, on their part, sadly annoyed their enemies by striking at them whenever the opportunity offered. The first of the hostile demonstrations on the part of the patriots occurred in October, 1776. General Hugh Mercer, who was in command of the American forces in that part of New Jersey contiguous to Staten Island, planned an attack upon the British intrenchments at Richmond. Passing over to the island with part of the troops posted at Perth Amboy, on the night of the 15th instant, he advanced to within a few miles of Richmond, at which point he had been informed three companies—one of British troops, one of Hessians and another of Skinner's militia—were stationed. Colonel Griffin was detached with Colonel Patterson's battalion and Major Clarke at the head of some riflemen, to fall in upon the east end of the town, while the remainder of the troops enclosed it on the other quarters. Both divisions reached the town by break of day, but the enemy had learned of their approach and were prepared to flee, exchanging only a few shots with Colonel Griffin's detachment. Two of the enemy were mortally wounded, and seventeen taken prisoners, two of the Americans being killed. Colonel Griffin received a wound in the foot from a musket ball, and Lieutenant Colonel Smith was slightly wounded in the arm. Among the prisoners taken in the action were eight Hessians. The attacking party also brought away forty-five muskets and other implements of war and one standard of the British Light Horse.

Later in the month the British fleet was anchored partly at the "Watering Place" and partly in Prince's bay, from the latter of which troops were frequently disembarked to the Jersey shore and up the Raritan to make predatory excursions



among the people in adjacent localities. Bergen had already been abandoned by the Americans as a place too much exposed and of too little importance to continue to occupy in the face of the possibilities of the British falling upon the stores of hay and provision that had been gathered there.

During the latter part of the year the king's forces under Cornwallis proceeded to New Brunswick, professedly to protect the magazine there, but probably desiring to provoke an engagement with Washington. The latter, however, refused to be drawn into an engagement to which he feared his forces were unequal, but spread his army over the Jerseys, taking positions at Newark, Elizabethtown and Woodbridge, thus commanding the coast opposite to Staten Island. In these towns he established his army during the remainder of the winter. So alert were his troops that they could not be surprised; and so strongly were they posted that any attempt to dislodge them by force must have been attended with great hazard and loss. The following from an English authority relates the position from that standpoint:

“Of all the great conquests which his Majesty's troops had made in the Jerseys, Brunswick and Amboy were the only two places of any note which they retained after the action at Princetown; and however brilliant their success had been in the beginning of the campaign, they reaped little advantage from them when the winter advanced, and the contiguity of so vigilant an enemy forced them to perform the severest duty.”

During the winter Howe was employed in forming several provincial corps from the Americans, British and Irish who had separated from their countrymen of their own choice, or had been obliged to leave their homes because of the tory sentiments they expressed. These new levies strengthened the British army by several thousand men. Several hundred of the citizens of Staten Island were among the number. They were placed on the same footing, as to pay, subsistence and clothing, as the regular troops. As a farther encouragement to the privates and non-commissioned officers, they were at the end of the war to receive certain proportions of land, according to the rank which they might then hold. These provincials were placed under command of the late Governor Tryon, who was now made



a major-general, and part of them were stationed on Staten Island.

In February, 1777, a detachment under Major Gordon marched from Richmond to Cole's ferry, where they embarked for Sandy Hook, where it was learned a considerable body of Americans were lying. After being detained on board by bad weather and violent winds for three days they, numbering about two hundred, effected a landing on the beach about two miles below the American posts, which they surprised before daylight in the morning. The Americans were driven from the Never-sink hills, sustaining a loss of several killed and seventy-four taken prisoners.

Predatory warfare and petty skirmishes were of frequent occurrence. On the 27th of February, Major Tympany crossed from Staten Island to Elizabethtown with about sixty men on a foraging expedition. He came into collision with a body of Americans, two or three of whom were killed, but the former escaped, bringing with him back to the island four or five prisoners and ten head of cattle.

Early in March a party of Americans made an attempt to gain the light-house at Sandy Hook, but were unsuccessful, the men posted there being protected by the guns of the "Syren" which lay at anchor near the spot.

About the same time a party of Americans came down the Jersey shore and fired on some boats that were taking in forage at New Blazing Star, on the island. Major Tympany thereupon crossed the river with about forty men and pursued the "rebels" about three miles, on his return bringing back ten head of cattle and thirty sheep.

The following extract from a letter addressed by Tryon to "Christopher Billop Esq; Colonel of the Militia of Richmond County, Staten Island," dated May 19, 1777, appeared in a New York paper of June 9, with the annexed remarks by the editor of the newspaper:

"It is my earnest recommendation, that the inhabitants of Richmond County, who had the first opportunity of testifying their loyalty to their Prince, and fidelity to the British constitution, on the arrival of the Kings troops, and which was most graciously accepted by his Majesty, should, on this occasion, eagerly follow the approved example of the militia of King's county, by liberally raising a sum of money for the comfort and encourage-



ment of the Provincial troops raised in this province. I enclose the form of the instrument which is adopted for the inhabitants of the city and county to subscribe; copies of which will by sent to Queen's and Suffolk counties, for a similar purpose. Any suggestion of fears and apprehensions from circumstances of situation, must, and assuredly will be construed into a lukewarmness at this crisis, to the King and the old constitution. Therefore, let the loyal subjects now distinguish themselves by free donations, and dare the worst from men who have struck at the root of their liberty and property."

The following editorial remarks are appended:

"We have the pleasure to inform the Public, that the loyal inhabitants of STATEN ISLAND have already subscribed *Five Hundred Pounds* for the Encouragement of the Provincial Corps of this Colony, and transmitted the same to our worthy Governor, to be applied to that laudable Purpose. The Subscription in other Parts meets with great Success among his Majesty's loyal Subjects, both in this City and County, and in the Counties upon Long Island, almost every one being desirous to give this Test of Loyalty and Love of constitutional Freedom. Trimmers and some doubtful Characters, it is expected, will be made manifest upon this Occasion, and of course be properly noticed."

On the 6th of June a party of about twelve British made a raid into Elizabethtown, where they were fired upon by the Americans, and a skirmish ensued, in which two or three were killed and several wounded. The British succeeded in stealing a flat-bottomed boat large enough to carry one hundred men.

About this time the British commander caused to be issued the following proclamation, which sufficiently explains itself.

"*Office of Commissary-General, New York, June 12, 1777.*

"WHEREAS his Excellency Sir WILLIAM HOWE, General and Commander-in-Chief of His Majesty's Forces, hath thought fit to order and direct Magazines of Forage to be established, for the better supplying of the troops under his Excellency's command: Notice is hereby given to the several Land-holders, *Farmers* and others, upon York-Island, Long-Island, and Staten-Island, who may be able to supply the said Magazines with Hay, Straw, Oats, and Indian Corn, that the following rates will be paid for the same, viz.:





“ Good Fresh Hay, at the rate of Five Shillings per Hundred Weight.

“ Straw, at Two Shillings per Hundred Weight.

“ Oats and Indian Corn, according to its quality.

“ And for the better encouragement of such persons to supply the said magazines, an allowance of One Shilling per Mile, for every Ten Hundred Weight, will be paid, over and above the price stipulated aforesaid, for the carriage of the said Forrage to the respective Magazines hereafter mentioned, viz.:

YORK ISLAND.

“ King’s-Bridge, Marston’s Wharf, City of New-York.

LONG-ISLAND.

“ Brooklyn Ferry, Hempstead-Harbor, Oyster-Bay, Great-Neck.

STATEN-ISLAND.

“ Cole’s-Ferry, Decker’s-Ferry.

“ At which said several places proper persons will be appointed to receive the same, to ascertain the weight thereof, and to certify the delivery: and upon certificates, ascertaining such weight and delivery, being produced at this office, the said Forrage will be paid for immediately.

“ His Majesty’s service requiring these Magazines to be established as soon as the season will permit, it is expected and required that all persons who raise forrage, do furnish a certain quantity, proportionable to the produce of each person respectively.

“ DANIEL WIER,

*“ Commissary General.”*

Howe and a large portion of his army were at this time in New Jersey. The objective point was Philadelphia. During the early part of the preceding winter the army had reached Trenton, but at the time when it seemed as though nothing lay in the way of their marching to Philadelphia and gaining an easy victory a sudden and unaccountable apathy seemed to seize the British commander, and he rested until the army of Washington was in a better position to resist his onward progress. By this time Howe’s army had returned to Amboy, and the project of reaching Philadelphia by land seemed to be abandoned. Another attempt, however, was made to draw Washington away from his fortifications, so that the British army could surround him. Having retreated slowly across the



state, while Greene was harassing his rear, he prepared to cross from Amboy to Staten Island, having determined to attempt to reach Philadelphia by water. Throwing a bridge, which had been constructed for crossing the Delaware, across the sound, he sent the heavy baggage and all the incumbrances of his army over to the island under the escort of some troops, while preparations were making for the passage of the rest of the army. Intelligence of this was received by Washington, who supposed that the British army was retreating in earnest, under a misapprehension of the strength of his own army. He accordingly descended from the hilly country where he was entrenched, and moved forward as though pursuing a flying enemy.

The British general, now thinking he had nearly gained his point, determined if possible to get between Washington and the mountains and force him to a general action on his own terms or cut off some of his detachments if he should retreat. He accordingly returned to Amboy, and on the 26th of June put his army in motion, advancing toward the pursuing forces of Washington. The forces came into collision and the British pursued as far as Westfield, but finding, as a British chronicler states, "that the caution and prudence of General Washington had rendered his schemes abortive," General Howe returned with his army to Amboy on the second day after its expedition against Washington, and on the 29th passed again over to Staten Island. In the meantime Washington wrote to congress from his camp at Middlebrook, June 28th, as follows :

"SIR, On Thursday morning General Howe advanced with his whole army in several columns from Amboy, as far as Westfield. We are certainly informed, that the troops sent to Staten Island returned the preceding evening, and it is said with an augmentation of marines : so that carrying them there was a feint, to deceive us."

The campaign of Howe in New Jersey and its results were summed up by a paper of the time in the following paragraph :

"Since our last we have certain intelligence, that soon after the skirmish with Lord Stirling's division, as mentioned in our last, the enemy filed off from Westfield to Amboy, and from thence to Staten Island, and left us in entire possession of New Jersey, in a small part of which they had been pen'd up for six



months, unable to do any great matters, except stealing a few cattle, and making Whigs of the wavering and diffident."

Among the troops stationed on the island at this time was a rising young man whom subsequent events made a conspicuous figure in the history of the revolution. This young man was Major John André, the spy. Though he was not prominent on the island, yet while here he made his will, and the interest which naturally attaches to his name must be our apology for the insertion of a copy of that document in this connection.

"*The following* is my last Will and Testament and I appoint as Executors thereto Mary Louisa André my Mother, David André my Uncle, Andrew Girardot my Uncle, John Lewis André my Uncle.

"To each of the above Executors I give Fifty Pounds.—I give to Mary Hannah André my Sister Seven Hundred Pounds.

I give to Ann Marguerite André my Sister Seven Hundred Pounds. I give to Louisa Katherine André my Sister Seven Hundred Pounds.—I give to William Lewis André my Brother Seven Hundred Pounds.—But the condition on which I give the above mentioned Sums to my aforesaid Sisters and Brothers are that each of them shall pay to Mary Louisa André my Mother the sum of Ten pounds yearly during her life.—I give to Walter Ewer Jun'r of Dyers Court Aldermanbury One Hundred Pounds.—I give to John Ewer Jun'r of Lincoln's Inn One Hundred Pounds. I desire a Ring value Fifty Pounds be given to my Friend Peter Boissier of the Eleventh Dragoons.—I desire that Walter Ewer Jun'r of Dyers Court Aldermanbury have the Inspection of my papers, Letters, Manuscripts, I mean that he have the first Inspection of them with Liberty to destroy or detain whatever he thinks proper, and I desire my Watch be given to him. And I lastly give and bequeath to my Brother John Lewis André the residue of all my Effects whatsoever.—Witness my Hand and Seal Staten Island in the province of N. York, N. America the 7th June 1777.

"JOHN ANDRÉ Capt'n in the 26th Reg't of Foot [L. S.]

"N. B. The Currency alluded to in this Will is Sterling Money of Great Britain.—I desire nothing more than my wearing Apparel be sold by public Auction, J. A.

"City and Province )  
of New York. ) ss.

*Be it remembered* that on the Ninth day of October in the



Year of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred and Eighty personally came and appeared before me Cary Ludlow, Surrogate for the City and Province aforesaid, Henry White and William Seaton both of the City and Province aforesaid Esquires who being severally duly sworn did declare that they were well acquainted with the hand writing of John André formerly Captain in the twenty-sixth Regiment of Foot and since Adjutant General Deceased that they have frequently seen him write, And that they verily believe that the before written Instrument purporting to be the last Will and Testament of the said John André bearing date the seventh Day of June One thousand seven hundred and Seventy Seven with the Subscriptions there-to are all of his the said John André's own proper hand Writing and further saith not.

“CARY LUDLOW Surr.”

It will be seen by the above that the will was admitted to probate just a week after the execution of its maker at Tappan on the 2d of October, 1780.

Howe having determined to approach Philadelphia by water began early in July the embarkation of his army from Staten Island. On the 5th he began placing on board of transports such corps as he wished to take with him, amounting to thirty-six battalions of British and Hessians, including the light infantry and grenadiers, the queen's rangers, a powerful artillery, and a regiment of light dragoons. The troops that remained in the vicinity of New York were placed under command of General Clinton, while under him General Knyphausen had command of Staten Island. Though preparations began thus early it was not until the 23d of the month that the fleet, consisting of two hundred and sixty-seven sail, passed outside of Sandy Hook.

At this time there seems to have been a desire on the part of the British to starve out the “rebels,” or at least to weaken and perplex them by preventing their obtaining any supplies from New York either directly or through Staten Island. To carry this out all commerce between here and the Jerseys was prohibited. It was difficult, however, to enforce such prohibition. On the 17th of July Sir William Howe issued a proclamation relating to the cargoes of vessels arriving at the port of New York. He appointed Andrew Elliot, Esq., superintendent of all imports and exports passing between New York and





Long Island and Staten Island, and in order that the inhabitants of the latter islands might be furnished with necessary supplies and at the same time to prevent supplies being conveyed to the "rebels" through these channels, he ordered that no craft of any kind should carry from the city to either of these islands, without special permit from the superintendent's office, any larger quantities of ram, spirits, sugar or molasses than one barrel of each, or of salt exceeding four bushels. No quantity of any other kind of merchandise larger than might be considered sufficient for the use of one family should be taken at one time. The penalty for the violation of the restrictions of this proclamation was forfeiture of the vessel, large or small, and the goods found on board, and imprisonment of the master in charge. Similar proclamations were subsequently issued.

After the removal of the troops from the island for the expedition to Philadelphia there were only about three thousand men left here. The principal part of this number were comprised in two regiments of Hessians, other troops being of the British and some of the provincial corps.

In the early part of August a party of Americans crossed the kills and landed somewhere on the shore at West New Brighton, and directed their course for Richmond. As they approached that village they were met by a party of British, who, after a slight resistance, retreated slowly until they reached St. Andrew's church, which they entered; the Americans fired at the windows until every pane of glass had been broken; they then approached, and fired through the broken windows until the British were driven out; a reinforcement from the vicinity of the quarantine had been hurried forward, who reached Richmond just as the church had been vacated. It was now the turn of the Americans to retreat, which they did by the Fresh Kill road, keeping the prisoners which they had taken in their rear. These consisted not of soldiers only but of citizens also, whom they had captured on their way; this prevented the British from firing, lest they should kill their own friends, or at least non combatants. After the Americans had descended the hill and crossed the bridge at the locality now known as Laforge's store, Westfield, they concealed themselves in a cornfield, where they waited until their pursuers were within reach, when they fired a volley at them and the British colonel in command was killed. Continuing their retreat until they



reached the shore of the sound, they drove their prisoners, some thirty in number, into a large hog sty, while they themselves seized what boats they required, and effected their escape. While they were crossing, the British reached the shore and opened on them with their artillery, which they had not yet had opportunity for using, and killed several of them.

On the 19th of the same month Colonel Dongan and Major Drummond, of the Third battalion of provincials, mostly from New Jersey, with about sixty men, set out from Staten Island on a predatory raid into New Jersey. They marched about twenty-seven miles into the interior, on the way capturing fourteen prisoners, about seventy cattle and horses, and twenty stand of arms, besides destroying a quantity of powder, shot, salt and rum. The transporting of the stock and prisoners across the sound at Amboy was covered by a guard on the Jersey side.

One of the most important engagements of the war on the island took place on the 22d of August, the particulars of which are as nearly in accordance with the following statements as we can gather the facts. General Sullivan, of the American forces, being then stationed at Hanover, N. J., some twenty miles or more from Elizabethtown, determined to make reprisals for the predatory raids that the Staten Island troops had been making into New Jersey. He learned that the British forces were distributed on the island about as follows: Colonel Buskirk, with a regiment of two hundred and fifty, was encamped near Decker's ferry; Colonel Barton, with his regiment of about the same number, near the New Blazing Star ferry; Colonel Lawrence, with one hundred and fifty provincials, near the Old Blazing Star ferry; Colonel Dongan (Edward Vaughn Dongan) and Colonel Allan, with one hundred men or more each, about two miles apart, between the latter point and Amboy; and two regiments of British regulars, two of Anspachers and one of Waldeckers were encamped by their fortifications near the "Watering Place," their numbers being unknown.

Sullivan well knew that any movement of troops by daylight in the country near the shore would be reported by Tories in time to allow the enemy an opportunity to prepare to oppose him. To avoid this a long march by night was the only resource. Accordingly his troops at Hanover were put in motion at about three o'clock in the afternoon of the 21st. These were selected



from the brigades of Generals Smallwood and De Borre, and numbered about one thousand men, who were supposed to be most ably prepared to endure a long march. The body reached Elizabethtown at about ten o'clock in the evening.

The forces were now divided, so as to make a simultaneous attack on two different points on the island. Colonel Ogden, with his own and Colonel Dayton's regiment, joined by one hundred militia under Colonel Frelinghuysen, marched from Elizabethtown in the evening to a point opposite the Fresh kill, where they were conveyed by boats across the sound and up the creek, their object being to attack Lawrence's regiment in the rear. The remainder of the troops crossed from Halstead's point or Elizabethtown point, approaching the island on the north shore. General Smallwood's brigade was to attack Buskirk's, and General De Borre's brigade was to attack Barton's regiment, each leaving one regiment on the main road to cover their rear, and to pick up such as might escape Colonel Ogden or the attacking parties. Ogden was instructed to move forward, should he complete the reduction of Lawrence's regiment, and attack Dongan and Allan, otherwise to hold his ground till Sullivan came up from the north side to join him.

In crossing the water some difficulty was experienced on account of a scarcity of boats, but the whole force were safely landed on the island before daylight, without being discovered by the British.

About day-break Ogden fell upon Lawrence and after an engagement of two or three minutes routed him, taking the colonel himself and about eighty privates and small officers prisoners. He then moved forward toward the positions of Dongan and Allan and drove them back. They fell back to the neighborhood of Prince's bay, where they found intrenchments which made their position too strong for the fatigued assailants to press against. Ogden now fell back toward Old Blazing Star and took position to wait for Sullivan. In the meantime the alarm had reached the commander at the fortifications on the northeast part of the island, and he, General John Campbell, at once marched with the Fifty-second British and Third battalion of Waldeckers toward Richmond, under the supposition that that point would be approached by the invaders.

Soon after the moment of the attack made by Ogden, General Sullivan moved with De Borre's brigade to attack Colonel Bar-



ton's regiment that lay at the New Blazing Star (or Decker's ferry). Here he found the latter drawn up to receive him, but upon the main body moving up to charge they broke ranks and fled. Sullivan had stationed Colonel Price off to the right to prevent the escape of the enemy, but many of them seized the boats that lay at the ferry and crossed to the Jersey shore, while others being acquainted with the intricacies of the swamps and woods were able to evade their pursuers. A considerable number of arms, blankets, hats, etc., were taken, and about forty privates, with Colonel Barton himself, were made prisoners. A barn and about thirty-five tons of hay were also burned.

At the same time General Smallwood, with his brigade, moved in another column to the neighborhood of the Dutch church, where they attacked what they supposed was Colonel Buskirk's regiment. General Smallwood's guide, instead of bringing him in the rear of the regiment, led him to a position in their full front. The latter had formed on the east side of the bridge and Smallwood's men, in a solid column, were moving over to attack them. The British, however, upon the first fire, broke and fled back to the fortifications on the northeast part of the island, where they were later in the day rallied by General Skinner, to whose corps they belonged, and were led by him to pursue the retiring Americans with the other regiments under Campbell. In their precipitate retreat before Smallwood's brigade, however, they left their stand of colors, which was taken by the Americans, and their tents which the latter destroyed, as they also did a quantity of hay and stores. Smallwood's men also burned several of their vessels which lay in the kill or creek near by.

The forces of Sullivan and Smallwood now effected a junction and moved inland toward Richmond to join the detachment of Ogden. About noon they reached Old Blazing Star and found that Ogden, after waiting till longer delay seemed unnecessarily hazardous, had sent his division across the river. Sullivan had sent a messenger to bring the boats from Elizabethtown point (Halstead's point) down the sound to help transfer his men across, but the messenger was detained on the way and the boats failed to come. In this emergency Sullivan began at once to transport his men by means of the three boats which Ogden had used, but before this could be accomplished the accumulated forces of Campbell, Skinner, Dongan and Allan were upon his





rear and his chances of escape were growing uncomfortably small. The rear was now covered by about eighty of Smallwood's Marylander's, commanded by Majors Stewart and Tillard, who ably maintained the honorable reputation of that brigade by their unflinching tenacity against overpowering odds. The bravery of this little party was highly commended by Sullivan and others at the time. By their determination the enemy was held back until all the troops except this company were safely conveyed across the river. So hotly did they contest the approach of the enemy that the latter were several times driven back with great confusion. They were, however, forced to retire and take new positions nearer the water, until they stood within twenty rods of the shore. The British at last brought up their heavy artillery which, with "grape and canister," so commanded the sound that the boatmen refused to face the fire and come after the rear-guard. Seeing this, and their ammunition also failing them this little band of heroes at last surrendered, though several of them escaped, seven of them even swimming across the channel, and others, perhaps, being drowned in the attempt. About forty of them were taken prisoners.

Various estimates were given as to the losses in this day's engagement on the island. The total loss to the British was one hundred and thirty privates and eleven officers taken prisoners, and probably twenty-five to one hundred killed and wounded; while that of the Americans was ten killed, fifteen wounded and one hundred and twenty-seven privates and nine officers taken prisoners. Besides this the British lost arms, baggage and a number of cattle carried away and stores and vessels destroyed, while the Americans lost a few whale boats which Campbell's command succeeded in capturing.

General Sullivan, in a letter to congress, in which he urged an investigation into his conduct relating to the affair, in order to clear himself from some charges which he regards as unjust, gives a summary of it in the following language:

"In this expedition we landed on an island possessed by the enemy; put to rout six regiments; killed, wounded and made prisoners at least four or five hundred of the enemy; vanquished every party that collected against us; destroyed them great quantities of stores; took one vessel, and destroyed six; took a considerable number of arms, blankets, many cattle, horses,



etc.; marched victorious through the island, and in the whole course of the day, lost not more than one hundred and fifty men, most of which were lost by the imprudence of themselves, and officers. Some few, indeed, were lost by cross accidents, which no human foresight could have prevented."

After this raid the British rested less easily. They were more watchful, and suspicious of another attack. Rivington's *Gazette*, of October 25, contained the following paragraph, which furnishes some suggestions in reference to the subject before us:

"By a Gentleman who has lately escaped from confinement in New Jersey, we have been favoured with the following particulars: \* \* \* It is imagined that another expedition is determined upon against Staten-Island under the command of Mr. Philemon Dickenson, who has assembled near 400 men about Elizabeth Town; boats and scows are also prepared, with a floating raft, to cross Bridge creek, and thereby secure a retreat to the point. Gen. Sullivan was, on his late unsuccessful attempt on this island, highly reprehended for not using this expedient, and, as he has been again blamed for his conduct at Brandywine, in Pennsylvania, he some time ago resigned his commission in disgust, and withdrew himself from the rebel army."

Tories who were so strong in their sentiments as to make a residence among the friends of independence undesirable, were frequently coming over to the island to join the British army or to take advantage of its protection. Some Quakers, whose peculiar principles forbade their taking any active part in war-like transactions, fled to the island as an asylum from the appeals of their active whig neighbors. Sullivan, in his raid on the island, claimed to have taken twenty-eight tories in addition to his other trophies, but the accounts from the other side represent that they were not tories but peaceable Quakers.

The fears of the British, above referred to, were not groundless. During November a number of raids were made by the Americans from Elizabethtown. On the night of Tuesday, the 18th, just before the rising of the moon, a party landed in the meadow, where they concealed themselves until they had the advantage of moonlight, when they surprised the picket, but after a brisk skirmish were obliged to abandon the scheme and return to Elizabethtown. Another attack was made the follow-



ing day, but so far as we can learn with no better success. Again, early on Thursday morning, the 20th, a body of "rebels," commanded by Philemon Dickenson, before spoken of, landed on the island and advanced upon the encampments of Campbell. No sooner had they opened fire on them, however, than they discovered reinforcements approaching and several ships of war steering for the island. Seeing that they would be overwhelmed by numbers they retired, and with the loss of a few prisoners made good their escape to the Jersey shore. On Friday another attempt was made to approach the island, but with no better results. In these raids more or less stores and provisions were carried off. At the final evacuation on Friday, the removal of what stores they had collected was executed under cover of an armed vessel, which approached the shore near the present site of Mariner's Harbor and fired occasional guns at the houses on the island.

Some difficulty seems at this time to have been experienced in enforcing the restrictions against the exportation of salt from New York to Staten Island, by which channel that article of necessity was smuggled into New Jersey. By a proclamation on the 15th of November, Clinton directed that the inhabitants of Staten Island should be allowed to carry salt for their family use, not exceeding three bushels for a family, on obtaining a certificate from a justice of the peace attesting that they were proper persons to be trusted with it. This regulation soon fell into abuse, and on the 18th it was amended by a further proclamation that all persons from the island applying for a permit to carry salt thither must have a certificate from either General Campbell or General Skinner, and general authority was given to any one who should intercept any person carrying salt without the requisite permit, to seize and appropriate the salt to his own use and purposes.

On the 20th of December General Clinton issued a remarkable proclamation regulating the prices of farm products, the arguments, objects and substance of which are shown in the following extracts:

"WHEREAS it is consonant not only to the common principles of humanity, but to the wisdom and policy of all well regulated states, in certain exigencies to guard against the extortion of individuals, who raise the necessaries of life, without which other parts of the community cannot subsist; and where-



as the farmers on Long-Island and Staten Island are possessed of great quantities of Wheat, Rye, and Indian Corn, for sale, beyond what they want for their own consumption, and it is highly unreasonable that those who may stand in need of those articles, should be left at the mercy of the farmer, and whereas it is equally just and reasonable that every encouragement should be given to the industry of the husbandman ; \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* and whereas the present rates at which Wheat, Flour Rye-Meal, and Indian Meal are sold, do vastly exceed in proportion the advanced price of those articles which the farmer stands in need of purchasing, \* \* \* \* \* do hereby order and direct that the prices to be hereafter demanded for the said articles shall not exceed the following rates,——

“A Bushel of Wheat weighing Fifty Eight Pounds, *Twelve Shillings*, with an Allowance, or deduction in proportion for a greater or lesser weight.

“A Bushel of Rye, or Indian Corn, *Seven Shillings*.

“Merchantable Wheat Flour, *Thirty-five Shillings* per Cwt.

“Rye Flour, *Twenty Shillings* per Cwt.”

“Indian Meal, *Seventeen Shillings* per Cwt.”

The proclamation further stipulated that the farmers of these two islands should at once make returns to the commanding officers of militia in their respective localities, showing the quantity of each kind of grain they had, and what quantity they would need for the use of their families during the year. He also ordered the farmers to thresh one third of their grain at once ; another third by the first of February and the remaining third by the first of May next. A refusal to comply with any of the requirements set forth in the proclamation should be punishable by confiscation of the entire crop of grain belonging to such offender, and imprisonment of his person.

In January, 1778, the prisoners taken in the raid of Dickenson during November preceding had not been exchanged, but on the contrary, some had been summarily dealt with, when the following correspondence passed between General Robertson and Governor Livingston of New Jersey, which, as it throws light on the condition of affairs and the results of the November raids on the island, we insert in full.

“New York, January 4, 1778.

“SIR,

“I am interrupted in my daily attempts to soften the calami-





ties of prisoners, and reconcile their case with our security, by a general cry of resentment, arising from an information——

“That officers in the King’s service taken on the 27th of November, and Mr. John Brown, a deputy-commissary, are to be tried in Jersey for high treason; and that Mr. Hiff and another prisoner have been hanged.

“Though I am neither authorized to threaten or to sooth, my wish to prevent an increase of horrors, will justify my using the liberty of an old acquaintance, to desire your interposition to put an end to, or prevent measures which, if pursued on one side would tend to prevent every act of humanity on the other, and render every person who exercises this to the King’s enemies, odious to his friends.

“I need not point out to you all the cruel consequences of such a procedure. I am hopeful you’ll prevent them, and excuse this trouble from, Sir,

“Your most obedient humble servant,

“JAMES ROBERTSON.

“N. B. At the moment that the cry of murder reached my ears, I was signing orders, that Fell’s request to have the liberty of the city, and Colonel Reynold to be set free on his parole, should be complied with. I have not recalled the order, because tho’ the evidence be strong, I can’t believe it possible, a measure so cruel and impolitic, could be adopted where you bear sway.

“To William Livingston, Esq., &c., &c.”

To this Governor Livingston replied :

“*January 7, 1778.*

“SIR,

“Having received a letter under your signature, dated the 4th instant, which I have some reason to think you intended for me, I sit down to answer your inquiries concerning certain officers in the service of your king taken on Staten Island, and one Browne who calls himself a deputy commissary; and also respecting one Hiff and another prisoner (I suppose you must mean John Mee, he having shared the fate you mention) who have been hanged.

“Buskirk, Earl and Hammel, who are, I presume, the officers intended, with the said Browne, were sent to me by General Dickenson as prisoners taken on Staten Island. Finding them all to be subjects of this state, and to have committed treason



against it, the council of safety committed them to Trenton goal. At the same time I acquainted General Washington, that if he chose to treat the three first who were British officers, as prisoners of war, I doubted not the council of safety would be satisfied. General Washington has since informed me that he intends to consider them as such; and they are therefore at his service, whenever the commissary of prisoners shall direct concerning them. Browne I am told committed several robberies in this state before he took sanctuary on Staten-Island, and I should scarcely imagine that he has expiated the guilt of his former crimes by committing the greater one of joining the enemies of his country. However, if Gen. Washington chooses to consider him also as a prisoner of war, I shall not interpose in the matter.

"Hiff was executed after a trial by jury for enlisting our subjects, himself being one, as recruits in the British army, and he was apprehended on his way with them to Staten-Island. Had he never been subject to this state, he would have forfeited his life as a spy. Mee was one of his company, and had also procured our subjects to enlist in the service of the enemy.

"If these transactions, Sir, should induce you to countenance greater severities toward our people, whom the fortune of war has thrown into your power, than they have already suffered, you will pardon me for thinking that you go farther out of your way to find palliatives for inhumanity, than necessity seems to require; and if this be the cry of murder to which you allude as having reached your ears, I sincerely pity your ears for being so frequently assaulted with cries of murder much more audible, because much less distant, I mean the cries of your prisoners who are constantly perishing in the goals of New York (the coolest and most deliberate kind of murder) from the rigorous manner of their treatment.

"I am with due respect,

"Your most humble servant,

"WILLIAM LIVINGSTON.

"James Robertson, Esq., &c. &c.

"P. S. You have distinguished me by a title which I have neither authority nor ambition to assume, I know of no man, sir, who *bears sway* in this state. It is our peculiar felicity, and our superiority over the tyrannical system we have dis-



carded, that we are not swayed by men—in New Jersey, Sir, the laws alone *bear sway*.”

The winter of 1777-78 developed a considerable amount of smuggling, which taxed the genius of General Clinton to the utmost to prevent. He appointed Alexander Gardiner wharf officer at Staten Island, and required all vessels carrying goods to the island to land them at Cole's ferry and nowhere else, and there all cargoes should be inspected by the said officer, who would allow goods to be taken thence to their places of destination on the island. This officer was also authorized to seize and confiscate all goods not corresponding to the superintendent's permit accompanying them, and also to seize and confiscate any vessel found employed in such illicit traffic.

The effort to prevent commerce between the island and New Jersey was not confined to the British authorities. It was prohibited also by the colonists. An illustration of the the efforts made to prevent commercial intercourse with the enemy is furnished by the following anecdote. In January, 1778, one William Pace, of Schooley's mountain, and Thomas V. Camp, of Somerset county, were both on their way to Staten Island, the latter with a quantity of flour and the former with four quarters of beef, intended for the British general. They were both arrested and taken before the council of safety on the 28th. It would have been regarded as high treason had evidence been sufficient to prove clearly that their cargoes were designed to supply the wants of the enemy, but this proof was wanting. Still there was evidence sufficient to warrant the council in confiscating the flour and beef and further imposing a fine upon each for asking a price for their goods higher than the law established. On the following day, however, evidence was produced that one Jacob Fitz Randolph, who lived at the Jersey side of the Blazing Star, had met them at "Sparck-Town," a locality infested by Tories on Rahway river, several miles southwest of Elizabethtown, and engaged to take their cargoes across the sound when the ice broke up if they would bring them to his house. They were accordingly apprehended and confined in jail for procuring provisions for the enemy.

Early in the morning of the 10th of June three boats were loaded with men at Elizabethtown and proceeded down the



sound to the mouth of the Fresh kill, and landing between the Blazing Star and Burnt island in the mouth of the kill, they surprised the picket, but being unable to drive them back they retired and waited on the Jersey shore until near daybreak, when they returned with an increase of numbers and attempted to land at the same place, under cover of their batteries. They met with such vigorous resistance from Skinner's brigade, who were guarding that point, that they were obliged to abandon the undertaking, and retired, with small loss on either side. In the meantime the British were thoroughly alarmed, and the corps of royal artillery which had been posted at the redoubts between Ryers' and Cole's ferries were put in motion with two six-pounders, and the troops at the different posts on the island were also under arms and marching toward the expected scene of action. The timely retirement of the Americans, however, made their presence unnecessary and probably saved themselves from the serious consequences of an encounter with superior numbers and the raking fire of artillery.

But little transpired on the island during the summer to be worthy of special notice. The operations between hostile forces were mainly confined to the petty depredations, smuggling and raiding of foraging parties on a small scale, which were of too frequent and continual occurrence to be worthy of special remark. In September (10th) the commissary of forage required the farmers to thresh out their grain at once "as the Straw is wanted for use of his Majesty's troops," for which they were to be paid legal rates on delivery at the magazine at Cole's ferry.

On the evening of the 30th of September an expedition having been fitted out with troops, embarked from Staten Island, set sail for Little Egg harbor, off which point they arrived on the 5th of October, having been delayed by adverse winds.

As the hard winter of 1778-9 came on proclamations were issued fixing the prices of various common necessities as follows: Walnut cordwood, or any other kind of wood, four pounds per cord; upland hay, eight shillings per cwt.; salt hay, four shillings per cwt.; straw, three shillings per cwt.; Indian corn, ten shillings per bushel; oats, seven shillings per bushel. Other proclamations of similar character were afterward issued. The following item, though not regulated by the military authorities of the island is of interest. It is from a paper of December 26.





"The intense cold weather has, within these two days, occasioned the quick-silver in the weather-glass to fall four degrees lower than has been observed for the last seven years; several ships, &c., and many lives have been lost by the monstrous bodies of ice floating in our Bay."

In March, 1779, Sir Henry Clinton, by proclamation gave permission to any loyal subjects of the king to enclose and cultivate for their own benefit portions of the cleared woodlands and other uncultivated lands of persons who had left their homes on Staten Island and Long Island, and were not under the protection of the government, and such loyal subjects were also permitted to erect temporary habitations upon such lands.

The "*New York Gazette*" of March 22, 1779, says: "Last Thursday morning a party of Rebels from Jersey, commanded by one Richmond, came to Prince's Bay in order to carry off a Boat that lay there loaded with wood; but before they could accomplish their Design a few of the Inhabitants assembled on the Beach and kept up such a brisk Fire upon them that they were obliged to relinquish their Prize, which happened to be aground, and make the best of their way home. Mr. Sleight, an Inhabitant of Staten Island, received a Wound in his Breast on this Occasion, but it is hoped he will do well.

"Two or three different Parties of them have been lately at the Seat of Col. Christopher Billop of the same Island in order to captivate him once more, with a view to get him for an Exchange."

At the same time parties from the island were making frequent incursions into New Jersey. As examples the two following paragraphs from Gaine's "*New York Gazette*," will suffice.

[April 26] "Last Wednesday Lieutenant-Colonel Buskirk sent off Capt. Ryerson, Lieut. Buskirk, and Ensign Earle with a Detachment of 42 Men of the 4th Battalion of New Jersey Volunteers, who fell in with the Rebels about Day-Break, immediately charged and put them to the Rout, killed and wounded a considerable Number, whom they passed on the Field begging for Mercy, while they followed the rest until reinforced by their Main Body, consisting of about 100 Carolina Troops and sixty militia; Captain Ryerson perceiving his Men much fatigued drew off his little Party to a rising Ground, where instead of being attacked by them so much superior in Number,



he saw them Retreat. His Loss on the Occasion was one Man missing and two wounded."

[July 3] "Last Tuesday Night a Detachment from his Majesty's 37th Regiment, with a Party of Col. Barton's and some Refugees, went over from Staten-Island to a Place called Woodbridge Raway, where they surprized a Party of Rebels in a Tavern, killed their commanding Officer Captain Skinner of a Troop of Light Horse, and another Man, and took the following Prisoners, viz.: Capt. Samuel Meeker, Christopher March, Joseph Stephens, Benjamin Willis, David Craig, Stephen Ball, Lewis Marsh, Jotham Moore, Jesse Whitehead, John Thorp, Thomas Bloomfield, Jeremiah Corey and David Hall."

As has before been intimated, Col. Christopher Billop was a conspicuous object, and the whigs of Jersey were anxious to secure him as a prisoner. Several attempts were made. At last, on the 23d of June, a party of about twenty landed near the house under cover of some trees, and undiscovered by the inmates of the house approached it and seized their victim, and bore him away to Jersey. On the same night a party landed and carried off another prominent tory, Colonel Cortelyou, and with him one William Smith of Woodbridge, who was his guest at the time.

We are prompted in passing, to give the following extract from a tory paper of September 18, 1779, which, though not openly germain to the subject, contains a hidden sarcasm, which may be seen in the light of the fact that the atmosphere of New York was strong with "loyal" sentiment, while the opposite was true in New Jersey.

"The old inhabitants of Staten-Island assert, that the cause of the Fever and Ague's having been so prevalent of late there, was the want of the usual quantity of Thunder and Lightning. But what shall we think of the cause, to which a Lady from Jersey attributes the sickly state of the inhabitants of that Province? She affirms it is entirely owing to the scarcity of Musketoos.—If what she affirms be true—how easily can we account for the great health abounding in this city. *We have Phlebotomists in plenty. Genuine.*"

The following records are suggestive and appropriate to this time:

"Sept. 28th 1779 Richmond County. Received of John Bedel



Esq. the sum of Fifty one Pound six shill for the use of the Gun boat as appears by the following receipt

“Richmond County Sept the 28. 1779

“Received of Messr Richard Conner, Christian Jacobson Henry Perine, Cornelis Corson supervissors for said Comnty the sum of Eighty four Pound being in full for my selfe & Eight men belonging to the gun boat commenceing the fourteent of august last and continued for one month

by me JAS. STEWART Capt”

There are allusions to the gun-boat in several places in the records ; it was probably one of the means used by Colonel Billop to enforce the order to prevent communication between New Jersey and Staten Island. This boat, for a time at least, appears to have been under the direction of Colonel Billop, and was an unpopular affair to the people on both sides of the water. It was an almost daily occurrence that those on board fired at any person within their reach on the Jersey shores ; with what effect, however, is not known. A company of a half dozen Jersey-men once attempted to get possession of the boat, but failed. It was lying at anchor one bright moonlight night under the shore of the island, and as no person was seen moving on board, they supposed their opportunity had come. Accordingly, one of their number was sent in a small boat to row up some distance above the gun-boat, and then to drift silently down with the ebb tide, and, as he passed, to observe whether there was any person on her deck. He succeeded in accomplishing his purpose, but discovered a man sitting flat upon the deck, apparently engaged in strapping a knife upon his boot. When he reached the shore he made his report, and the enterprise was abandoned for the time, nor do we know that it was ever after renewed.

The sloop “Neptune” was kept as a guard-boat, stationed above Decker’s ferry. She was in command of Captain Palfrey. By some untoward circumstances she drifted or by some means fell within range of the guns of the fort at Elizabethtown point on the morning of October 15th, and there she grounded. Captain Coogle, who was in command at Decker’s ferry, discovered her situation and sent Cornelius Hetfield, who had command of a gun-boat at that post, with twenty men to recover the sloop. The latter was at once joined by Job Hetfield in another boat, well manned, and they both set off for the “Neptune,” which by



this time had been boarded by about thirty men from the opposite shore. The latter, seeing the superior numbers and strength of their assailants, abandoned the sloop and the Hetfield party went on board. The cannon from the fort now opened on the sloop and the fire was returned by the Hetfields. For several hours the vessel remained aground, before the tide arose sufficiently to float her, and during that time firing continued with more or less activity. Though several men were wounded, and perhaps some killed, and considerable damage done, the boat was able to escape to her station.

November 24, 1779, Sir Henry Clinton issued his proclamation to procure fuel for the approaching winter. It was well that he thus early made preparation for the needs of his army during what proved to be a long and extremely cold winter. He required all persons who had obtained permission to cut wood "off certain lands on Long Island and Staten Island immediately to bring what wood they have cut to this market," and required all owners of woodlands on those islands to cut and cart their wood to the most contiguous landings in such proportion "as will fully answer the intent and meaning of this proclamation and prevent the disagreeable necessity of granting permission to their wood to be cut by others." Later in the winter, Governor James Robertson, of the province of New York, issued a proclamation forbidding the cutting of wood on the estates of persons "supposed to be in rebellion."

The third important attempt to invade the island was made during this winter—which is known as the hard winter of 1779-80. The American forces were quartered in New Jersey for the winter, but poorly clothed, provisioned and armed. General Washington, in his quarters at Morristown, planned this expedition, and left its direction to General Stirling. From their peculiar exposure and sufferings at the moment, the commander-in-chief, perhaps, suggested this attack, to divert the minds of his discontented men from their numerous and fearful forebodings. The American army was then encamped on the hills back of Morristown, the encampment extending several miles into the country. Their canvas tents afforded but a miserable security from the rain, sleet and snow. On the 3d of January came one of the most tremendous snow storms ever remembered. Some of their sheltering hovels and tents were blown down or torn to pieces, and the soldiers became like





sheep under the snow, which fell to a depth of from four to six feet. So obstructed were the roads as to prevent the usual receipt of supplies, and for ten days each man had but two pounds of meat and some even were entirely destitute. But why continue the details of the condition of the American army during that hard winter? They are matters of general history. We have given enough to show that it was under the most disheartening circumstances that the plan of invading Staten Island was conceived and set in operation.

General Stirling was dispatched with a body of the troops to attack the outposts of the enemy on Staten Island. They proceeded in sleighs, and crossing the river on the ice at Elizabethtown point, took up their line of march toward the present site of Port Richmond. The bridge of ice was sufficient to allow the passage of any force across the kills, and it was supposed that the same obstruction would prevent the movement of reinforcements to the enemy by means of their shipping in the bay. The detachment under Stirling numbered about two thousand five hundred men.

When a little east of Port Richmond the column divided, part marching onward toward New Brighton, where the British post had been erected on the hills, and the other wing proceeding up Mill lane, the present Columbia street of West New Brighton, and approached the mill which stood at the head of the pond. The night of the 14th, on which they made this long passage from camp to the designed scene of action was a starry night, bright and clear, but so intensely cold that about one third of the men were more or less wounded by the biting frost. The intent was to surprise Skinner's brigade of new recruits, but it was soon discovered that their designs had been anticipated by the enemy, information having reached them through the kind offices of their tory friends. A surprise was now out of the question, and as the works of the enemy were well situated and apparently strong, and the means of receiving reinforcements from New York not obstructed as had been expected, it was deemed unadvisable to make an assault.

The troops spent the day of the 15th of January and the following night on the island, in snow waist deep, protecting themselves as well as they could from the inclement weather by making huge fires of the cordwood which they found piled up where they halted. The British during the day sent a boat to



New York, which returned at evening with reinforcements. On the morning of the 16th Stirling withdrew his detachment to Elizabethtown. The official report of Stirling concludes with the following statements :

“ The retreat was effected in good order, and with very little loss. A party of the enemy's horse charged our rear guard under Major Edwards, but was immediately repulsed. The major had three men killed. Some few of the men were frost bitten, and though we took all the pains in our power to have all those unable to march transported in sleighs, yet I imagine a very few may have been left behind.

“ Immediately after crossing, a party was detached under Lieutenant-Colonel Willett, to Decker's house. The corps there had been alarmed and barely made its escape. The house as a garison place, and 8 or 9 small vessels were burned. A considerable quantity of blankets and other stores were found.

“ While the troops were upon the island, a number of persons from this side [Elizabethtown] took advantage of the occasion to pass upon the island, and plunder the people there in the most shameful and merciless manner. Many of them were stopped on their return, and their booty taken from them. In addition to which, I have sent an order for publication, requiring those who had eluded the search to restore the articles in their possession, and exhorting the good people at large, to assist in detecting them. All the soldiery on recrossing the ice, were searched, and the little plunder they had taken from them, and their names noted, that they may be brought to punishment. The articles recovered are, and will be deposited with the Revd. Mr. Caldwell, who is exerting himself in the affair, to be returned to the owners. I am happy to inform your Excellency, that a very inconsiderable part indeed, of the troops, dishonored themselves, by participating in these enormities.”

Additional light is thrown upon the affair by the following extract from a letter from an officer on board the British brig “ Hawk,” lying off Staten Island at the time.

“ On the 15th inst. at Day break, the Alarm was given, that the Rebels were on Staten Island, an Express was sent on board from Gen. Sterling to prepare for Action; we immediately got a Spring on our Cable and cleared Ship, the Rebels appeared on the Hill over the Ferry, and brought a Field Piece to bear upon us, which we perceiving, fired our bow Gun twice



at them, the second shot roused them from a Meal they were making of broiled Beef Stakes; their Fire from the Field Piece was well directed, but the Shot fell short of us some Yards. A large Party of Rebels came down to burn the Houses and Forage, we fired on them, shot one Man's Arm off; he bled to death and now lays in the snow; our Firing made them retreat as fast as possible up the Hill to their main Body (which by the Information of two Prisoners and a Deserter that we had on board, consisted of 4,000 Foot, 200 Horse, 6 Brass Field Pieces 6 Pounders, and a Number of Artillery Men) Gen. Skinner sent a Letter on board, thanking us for the Service we did. 'Tis certain that the 'Hawk' prevented the Forage, the Tavern, and all the Houses in that Neighborhood from being burnt. A Number of Men, Women and Children came on board for Refuge with their Goods and Effects."

Another British account contains so much that will be read with interest that it is presented here. Proper allowances must be made for the partisan coloring in these statements of interested persons at the time :

"On Friday Night the 14th inst. a large Detachment from the Rebel Army, consisting, it is supposed, of between 3 and 4000 Men, with 6 Pieces of Cannon, and 2 Howitzers, moved suddenly from the Neighborhood of Morris-Town, and being (as it is reported) transported in *Sleighs* over the Ice, reached Staten-Island before Day break in the Morning of the 15th, bending their March towards Decker's-Ferry. Colonel Buskirk commanding the 4th Battalion of Brigadier-General Skinner's Brigade posted there, having received Intelligence of their Approach, judged it proper to retire towards Ryerson's Ferry, not being in Force sufficient to oppose so considerable a corps. The Rebels pursued their March, and before Noon took Post upon the Heights, near the Redoubts, constructed at the North End of the Island : from their Position, cutting off the Communication between the Corps huddled there, and the Troops at Richmond and the Flag Staff : they remained in this Situation till early in the Morning of the 16th, when they were observed retiring from Staten Island, without attempting any Thing ; they burnt Decker's House, and a very few small Vessels frozen in by the Ice at that Place. A small Detachment which harassed their Rear, made a few Prisoners ; and several Deserters came to the different Posts during their Stay on the Island.



“They committed many Excesses, in plundering and distressing the Inhabitants.

“Sixteen Prisoners have been already sent to New York ; and it is imagined there are others not yet arrived from Staten Island.”

It may be noted in passing that the ice soon after became more solid, and there was a bridge across the bay from the island to New York, over which loaded sleighs and other heavy burdens were drawn. A paper of February 7 has the item that eighty six loaded sleighs passed over on the ice the day before. The most intense frost, accompanied by great falls of snow began about the middle of December, and shut up navigation to the port of New York from the sea for many weeks. The severity of the weather increased to such an extent that about the middle of January all communication with New York city by water was cut off, and new means opened by the ice. The passage of the North river from the city was about the 19th of January practicable for the heaviest cannon, a circumstance previously unknown in the memory of man. Soon after provisions were transported in sleighs, and detachments of cavalry marched from New York to Staten Island upon the ice. The East river was also blocked up for many days. In this state of their communications the British on New York island were apprehensive of an attack from the army of Washington, and set on foot a project for putting the loyal expressions of the inhabitants to a test by raising about forty companies of troops among them. This gave them good courage and they actually began to hope that the Americans would make an attack, so well prepared did they feel to resist it. It was not until the 20th of February that the frost abated so as to allow the waters surrounding New York to become navigable.

General Knyphausen, who had command of the Hessian troops on Staten Island, early in June, 1780, resolved to make an incursion into New Jersey, Springfield being the point to which his efforts were to be directed. On the night of the 6th he passed over with about five thousand men, accompanied by Generals Robertson, Tryon and Sterling to Elizabethtown point. The militia stationed near there fired upon them and Sterling was wounded in the thigh. The British troops, however, maintained their march and reached the town (Elizabeth) early in the morning of the 7th, whence, after a halt, they moved on





toward Springfield. Finding the forces in that direction too strong to oppose, he drew back to Elizabethtown and awaited the arrival of Clinton and Arbuthnot on their return from Charlestown. The main strength of Washington's army now being engaged in guarding points along the North river which were threatened by the British commander, Knyphausen having been reinforced marched again toward Springfield, where he engaged the Americans under Green and Dickenson, on the 23d. From this engagement he returned the same day to Elizabethtown, and during the night following brought his entire army across to Staten Island.

Toward the end of October, 1780, there was great excitement among the British on Staten Island, caused by a rumor that Lafayette had arrived in the vicinity of Elizabethtown with a large force, and furnished with boats on wheels, and that he meditated an attack on the British posts on the island. Every precaution was taken to prevent a surprise; the defenses were all strengthened, and defects which they supposed would not be observed by the inexperienced and uneducated eyes of the American officers, but which the more cultivated observation of the French would readily detect, were repaired so far as time and means permitted. Simcoe marched his rangers down from Richmond to Billop's point toward the close of the day, in full view of the people on the opposite shore, to create the impression that an inroad into New Jersey was about to be made, and then marched them back again through the interior after dark. Reinforcements were sent from New York city, and Simcoe issued the following proclamation:

"The Lt. Colonel has received information that M. Lafayette, a Frenchman, at the head of some of his majesty's deluded subjects, has threatened to plant French colors on the Richmond redoubts. The Lt. Colonel believes the report to be a gasconade; but as the evident ruin of the enemy's affairs may prompt them to some desperate attempt, the Queen's Rangers will lay in their clothes this night, and have their bayonets in perfect good order."

He also had orders from the commander-in-chief to abandon his post "if the enemy should land in such force as to make, in his opinion, the remaining there attended with risk." Nothing, however, came of this alarm.



The following letter, sent by Washington to Captain Judah Alden, commanding officer at Dobb's ferry, indicates that the American leader had some important scheme in contemplation which for some reason or other was never carried out, and the details of which are unknown to us. Nevertheless we consider the letter worthy of preservation, as it shows that Washington's eye was frequently turned toward Staten Island, and that he had a lively sense of the importance of this little bit of territory in the great struggle.

“HEADQUARTERS, 23d Novem., 1780.

“SIR: I impart to you in confidence that I intend to execute an enterprise against Staten Island to-morrow night, for which reason I am desirous of cutting off all intercourse with the enemy on the east side of the river. You will therefore to-morrow at retreat beating set a guard upon any boats which may be at the flat or neck, and not suffer any to go out on any pretense whatever until next morning. Toward evening you will send a small party down to the Closter landing, and if they find any boats there you will give orders to have them scuttled in such a manner that they cannot be immediately used, but to prevent any possibility of it the party may remain there until toward daylight—but are not to make fires or discover themselves—and then return to your post. I depend upon the punctual observation of this order, and that you will keep this motive a secret. Acknowledge the rec't of this, that I may be sure you have got it.

“I am, Sir, Yr. Most obt. Servt.,

“GEO. WASHINGTON.”

On Friday evening, February 23, 1781, Capt. Cornelius Hetfield, with a party of five tory refugees from New Jersey, crossed over to Elizabethtown and attacked the command of Captain John Craig, who was posted there. Seizing them by surprise the assailants were able to secure the captain and ten men as prisoners, and with them they returned to Staten Island. A similar raid was made on the night of March 1st, when a party of tories brought off Commissioner Clossen and an ensign and another man. The same method of partisan warfare was being prosecuted by the whigs from New Jersey, who made frequent descents upon the tories of the island, carried away prisoners and plundered their families.

On the 20th of March a party of militia and refugees from the



island, under command of Lieut. Richard Seaman of the militia and Joseph Shotwell of the refugees, made an incursion several miles into the country in the township of Woodbridge, where they captured and brought off two subalterns and eleven privates of the New Jersey militia. On their return they boasted with apparent pride that they had not stooped to the meanness of plundering the houses of those who fell in their power.

The leader of the above exploit was at this time desirous to dispose of his farm, as will be seen by the following announcement, which is too much of a curiosity to be thrown away.

“To be sold at Vendue, On Thursday the 19th inst, The Farm belonging to Richard Seaman, very pleasantly situated on the south side of Staten-Island (formerly the mansion house and part of the valuable plantation that did belong to Mr. Jaquis Poiloin, deceased) containing 190 acres, exclusive of the beach and flats on the front of the said farm, which will be included in the purchase on which comes great quantities of sea weed (a very valuable manure.) On said farm is a good house, barn, and all other necessary out-houses, a very good apple orchard of above 200 ingrafted trees of the best fruit, now in its prime, with most sorts of other fruit trees, common to this country. The natural advantages of this plantation are so well known, that it is unnecessary to say any more on the subject. The vendue will be held on the premises, where the conditions of sale will be made known by Richard Seaman.”

On Saturday evening, the 21st of April, Capt. Cornelius Hetfield, with some of his tory refugees and a detachment of General Skinner's corps under his command, crossed over to Elizabethtown, where they surprised and drove in the picket. Here they engaged in a skirmish, in which one of their number, Elias Mann, a tory, was killed. Hetfield and one private were also wounded. The party succeeded in liberating one Michael, a tory, who was held there in chains, and then made good their return to the island.

A return of this kind of excursion took place on Tuesday, May 9th. Captain Hendricks, accompanied by a sergeant and eleven men, came from Elizabethtown to the island and attempted to take the patrol of the First battalion of New Jersey loyalists. Finding it impossible to surprise them they secreted themselves in the woods until they supposed the patrol had left the neighborhood, but were discovered later and a skirmish



ensued, in which one man was killed, another wounded, and two of the assailants made prisoners. They then retired to the Jersey shore.

We give the account of another of these incursions as related from the British stand-point. On the 29th of June a party, consisting of thirty-eight of the First battalion of New Jersey volunteers, with about thirty-four militia and refugees, the former under the command of Lieutenant Hutchinson and Ensign Barton, and the latter under command of Captains Durham and Robbins, landed at Twembley's point, near the mouth of Rahway river and surrounded a tavern in hopes of taking three rebel light horse, who were supposed to be stationed there to give notice of any troops approaching from Staten Island. Not finding these men here they proceeded to the house of one Captain Amos Morse, who was surprised and taken out of his bed, with four other "rebels." The party then went in search of cattle, and succeeded in capturing about forty head, and eighty sheep. As they were driving them to the landing at Twembley's point about forty of the "rebels" having collected, pursued them, and a skirmish ensued, in which twenty of the pursuers were made prisoners and some others were wounded. The British and tories were then able to land their booty and prisoners on Staten Island.

July 21st Captain Hetfield made an incursion into New Jersey and brought off Lieutenant Obadiah Meeker and fourteen privates of the "rebel" militia as prisoners, with whom he returned to Staten Island.

On the night of the 23d of August a party from New Brunswick, under command of Captain Hyler, in six boats, landed on the island and took off with them three tories and nine horses. They also collected about one hundred head of cattle on the shore, but the militia of the island being apprised of their movements, they were unable to convey them away.

The incident related in the following paragraph, taken from a newspaper of November 12, 1781, shows the social possibilities under a martial condition such as that in which Staten Island then lay :

"Last Saturday William Hetfield, an inhabitant of Elizabeth-Town, Rahway, came to Staten Island with a small quantity of flour to dispose of, that he might get some hard money which would enable him to pay the taxes imposed by the rebel Gov-





ernor: On his return in the evening, he was met in the Sound by one Peter Terrat, a noted thief, who supports himself and a gang of such miscreants, by robbing and plundering; to him and his party Hetfield surrendered himself; but after he was a prisoner, Terrat thought Hetfield threw something overboard, on which the infernal fiend took a pistol out of his pocket and shot him dead, laid the body on the bank of the Sound, and went off exulting with the other prisoners he had taken.

"Hetfield has left a wife and several children to lament their loss. It is said the people of the county, detesting such horrid violence, intend making enquiry into the murder, and punish the villain as he deserves.

"We since hear that a Jury has brought a verdict against him *guilty of murder*, on which he fled from justice."

Captain Adam Hyler, who has been already mentioned, made many predatory raids on Long Island, Staten Island and in New Jersey. He was an active partisan in and about that part of New Jersey where he resided. As his expeditions against the enemy were chiefly conducted by water, and in small boats, it is probable that he held his title of captain by courtesy, and not by commission. In January, 1782, a party of infantry from Staten Island, in six boats, went up the Raritan to New Brunswick, and before daylight succeeded in capturing all his boats. In less than a month thereafter Hyler launched a large new boat built for thirty oars.

The following, taken from a paper published in New York, in the interests of the royalists, is another instance of the enterprise and indomitable resolution of Hyler. The date is July 15, 1782:

"Last Tuesday night Mr. Hyler took 2 fishing boats near the Narrows, and ransomed them for \$100 each. One of them has been twice captured."

The same day "a little before sunset, Mr. Hyler, with 3 large 24-oared boats, made an attack on the galley stationed at Prince's Bay, south side of Staten Island. There being little or no wind, he came up with a good deal of resolution, but Capt. Cashman gave him an 18-pounder, which went through the stern of one of the boats, and obliged Hyler to put ashore on the Island, where, after a smart combat, he was obliged to leave one of his boats and make the best of his way home with the other two."



“John Althouse, with 12 men, was on board a guard-boat at anchor in Prince’s Bay, when two whale boats were descried under South Amboy shore. It was calm. The cable was sprung and a 24-pounder brought to bear, which sent a shot through Hyler’s boat. His crew were taken in the other boat, (Dickey’s) and all made off for New Brunswick with Gen. Jacob S. Jackson, whom they had captured in South Bay, and kept prisoner till he was ransomed.”

The mantle of Captain Hyler appears to have fallen on other shoulders after his death. The *New Jersey Gazette* of November 13, 1782, says: “The brave Capt. Storer, commissioned as a private boat-of-war, under the States, and who promises fair to be the genuine successor of the late valiant Capt. Hyler, has given a recent instance of his valor and conduct in capturing one of the enemy’s vessels, and in cutting out a vessel lying under the flag-staff and within half pistol shot of the battery of 14 guns, at the watering-place, Staten Island.”

But the years of war were drawing to a close. The tale of plunder, rapine and murder, committed under the pretext of war was closed, and on the 16th of June, 1783, Adjutant General De Lancey issued from his headquarters in New York the proclamation by which all estates on the island were to be immediately delivered up to their proprietors or their attorneys. This, however, did not entirely conclude the condition of war, or abolish the presence of a soldiery. A few months of hesitancy ensued.

On the 25th day of November, 1783, the British finally evacuated New York and Staten Island. Eight years before, they had entered the country with the expectation that, in less than as many months, they would overrun it from north to south, and trample out the rebellion. The people should be made to bow with abject submission before the invincible power of Great Britain, and humbly sue for the privilege of lying in the dust and having her foot placed upon their necks. The march of the army through the land, from its beginning to its end, was to be an uninterrupted triumph. But they now returned overcome and crestfallen. The rebellion which they came to conquer had conquered them, and their overweening arrogance and pride had received a blow such as it had never received before nor has since. An eye witness of their departure described the scene as in the highest degree impressive. Several days before the 25th



had been occupied in conveying the troops, cannon, tents, etc., from the land to the vessels, both in New York and on Staten Island. When all was ready, they passed through the Narrows silently ; not a sound was heard save the rattling of the cordage. "We stood," he said, "on the heights at the Narrows, and looked down upon the decks of their ships as they passed. We were very boisterous in our demonstrations of joy ; we shouted, we clapped our hands, we waved our hats, we sprang into the air, and some few, who had brought muskets with them, fired a *feu-de-joie*. A few others, in the exuberance of their gladness, indulged in gestures, which, though very expressive, were neither polite nor judicious. The British could not look upon the scene without making some demonstration of resentment. A large seventy-four, as she was passing, fired a shot which struck the bank a few feet beneath the spot upon which we were standing. If we had had a cannon, we would have returned it, but as we had none, we ran away as fast as we could. A few rods from us stood another group, composed of men and women, who gazed silently, and some tearfully, upon the passing ships, for some of the females had lovers, and some husbands on board of them, who were leaving them behind, never, probably, to see them again. It was long after dark when the last ship passed through the Narrows."

But they did not all go ; many of the soldiers, especially Hessians, who had no home attractions across the water, when they learned that peace had been declared, and that the army would shortly leave the country, deserted, and sought places of concealment, from which they emerged when the power to arrest them had departed. Many had formed attachments which they were unwilling to sunder. But many more were detained by admiration of the country, and a desire to make for themselves a new home in a new world. From some of these have descended men whose names are written in the country's history.

Let us turn now for a brief space to review the period of the war and its general effect upon the people. If the history of the sufferings of the people of Staten Island during the war could be written, it would present a picture too dreadful to contemplate. Neither age, sex nor condition were exempt from insults and outrages of the grossest character ; no home was too sacred to protect its inmates from injury ; the rights of property were not recognized, if the invader coveted it ; even the



temples of God were desecrated; the law of might alone prevailed. Proclamations and professions of good will and protection were repeatedly promulgated, but those who relied on them usually reaped disappointment. It was useless to appeal to those high in authority, for the complaints of the people were unheeded, and redress of injuries, except under peculiar circumstances, could not be obtained. If a British officer's horse was in need of hay or oats, a file of soldiers was sent to any farmer who was known to have a supply, to seize and take away what was wanted. If the officer himself needed a horse, the same method was adopted to procure one. Money, provisions and even bedding and household furniture, were taken by force; sometimes promises of payment were made, but these were seldom fulfilled. The course adopted by the British while in possession of the island, effectually alienated many of the friends of the royal cause, and hence it was that so many of them, at the close of the war, eagerly took the oath of allegiance to the new government, and so few adhered to the cause of the king, and followed its fortune.

Numerous instances of suffering are preserved in the traditions of some of the old families of the island. There was one man of local notoriety whose name is still remembered and mentioned by the descendants of those whose misfortune it was to suffer at his hands; his name was Nathaniel Robbins; he resided at what is now known as New Springville, but the house which he occupied was demolished many years ago. It stood near the corner of the roads leading to Richmond and Port Richmond, fronting on the former. He was an Englishman by birth, dissolute in his habits, and the terror not only of those who dwelt in his neighborhood, but of the whole county. His wife was a native of Staten Island, and a daughter of the widow Mary Merrill. The opinion which his wife's mother entertained of him may be inferred from a clause in her will, which was dated January 10th, 1789, and in which she bequeaths to her daughter Mary Robbins the sum of £40, "so as never to be in the power or at the command of Nathaniel Robbins, her present husband." His depredations were generally committed under some disguise, which he supposed effectually concealed his identity, though he was often betrayed by his voice or some other tell-tale circumstance.





He had his associates it is true, who were also well known, but Robbins was regarded as the leader and soul of the gang.

Those families residing near the sound, or "the lines," as it was called, suffered more from marauders than those who dwelt in the interior, because the opportunities for approach and escape there were more convenient. As part of the local history of the island, authenticated chiefly by family traditions, which are accepted as reliable, several instances are subjoined.

At or near Chelsea dwelt several families of the name of Prall, some of whose descendants are among the most respectable of our citizens at the present day. Among them were two brothers, Abraham and Peter, both prosperous farmers and men of substance. The house in which the former resided has since been considerably modernized, on the Chelsea road, at no great distance from the Richmond turnpike. The Chelsea road at that time was little better than a private lane leading to these residences from the main road, and passing through dense woods. On one occasion a man who was indebted to Abraham Prall called on him and paid him a considerable sum in gold. The next evening the family were surprised by the approach of two men, who were evidently disguised. Their errand was at once suspected, and the old man had just time enough to take the money he had received out of the cupboard in which he had deposited it, and put it into his pockets. When the strangers entered one of them presented a pistol at him and said, "Prall, we know you have money, so deliver it up at once." He was very much alarmed, and his wife, perceiving his agitation, said, "Father, don't be alarmed, these men are our neighbors." She had detected the speaker by his voice, and knew him to be the same person who had paid the money the previous evening, and had seen it deposited in the cupboard. "Do you suppose," said the old man, "that I am so unwise as to keep any large sum of money in my house in times like these? You are welcome to any money you may find in the house." They took him at his word, and the cupboard was the first place visited.

The rest of the house was also searched, but without success. They then turned to go, but directed the old man to go before them through the lane to the public road. The path through the woods was intensely dark, and he managed, as he went



along, to drop his guineas, one by one, upon the ground, until by the time they had reached the highway he had none remaining in his pockets. Here another effort was made to compel him to tell what he had done with it, but all the reply they could extort from him was, "The money I had in my house yesterday is not now in my possession." He was then searched, and made to solemnly swear that he would never divulge the circumstances of their visit, nor mention any names he might suspect. The oath, though by no means obligatory, he scrupulously kept. The next morning he retraced his steps of the previous night, and picked up every piece of his money.

A younger member of one of these families, while on his way homeward, at a late hour, on horseback, near the corner of the Port Richmond and Signs roads, New Springville, was suddenly stopped by a man, who rushed out of the bushes, seized his horse by the bridle, and ordered him to "deliver up." The horse was very spirited, and with a touch of the rider's spur suddenly sprang forward, throwing his assailant violently to the ground. Then, at the utmost of his speed, he made for home, springing over every fence or other obstacle, until he reached his stable door in safety.

At another time, two young men took a sleigh ride to the south side of the island. When they returned, before removing the harness from their beasts, they ran into the house for a moment to warm their hands, when one of the family came running into the room saying that somebody was taking their horses away. Rushing out together, they saw two men in their sleighs driving rapidly in the direction of the sound. As pursuit was useless they stood still, and saw the thieves cross the sound on the ice, until they reached the Jersey shore, and then disappear in the country. They never saw their horses afterward.

Mr. John Bodine, who then lived on the present poor house farm, having received a considerable sum of money, suspected that the fact was known, and if so, that an attempt would be made to rob him. He therefore buried it under the step-stone at his back door. His suspicions proved to be well founded. His expected visitors made their appearance the following evening and demanded all the money he had in the house. It was in vain that he protested that there was no money in the house. They insisted on searching for it, but before doing so bound him hand and foot, and then proceeded with their villainous



work. Nothing, however, was found. But they were not discouraged. If the money was not in the house he had concealed it, and must reveal the place. He concluded that if prevarication was ever justifiable it was under just such circumstances as those in which he was then placed, so he persisted in his denial of having any or having concealed any. They threatened to shoot him. He told them to shoot away, he could not give them what he had not. Perceiving that the fear of death did not intimidate him, they resorted to torture. They heated a shovel, and proceeded to burn him on various parts of his body, but all in vain ; he persisted in his denial, and they finally desisted, supposing it to be improbable, if not impossible, for any man to endure so much agony for any amount of money.

It was not only money that excited the rapacity of these thieves. Household furniture, clothing, linen, anything that had value in their eyes was ruthlessly carried away. One family had a vault constructed under the floor of a cider mill in which beds, bedding and other articles, except some of the most common description, and in constant use, were concealed. Several years after the war a man who resided near "the lines," being on business in New Jersey, discovered in one house a mirror and several pictures belonging to himself, of which his house had been robbed during the war.

We are indebted for the following incident to a man who died more than a quarter of a century ago, then in his ninetieth year.

One afternoon, late in the fall, two British officers on horse back rode into his barn-yard, and having dismounted, entered the barn, and seeing two horses in their stalls, peremptorily ordered him to take them out and put theirs in. They then directed him to see that their beasts were well fed and otherwise cared for. From the barn they went into the house, and ordered the mistress to show them her best room. This being done, they proceeded to the upper part of the house, and after having examined every apartment, selected one, and directed her to prepare two beds in that room, and to see to it that they were clean and comfortable in all respects, and that the best room was furnished with everything suitable for the accommodation of gentlemen. They then descended into the cellar, and examined the family stores there and in the out-houses. Having ascertained the conveniences of the place, they ordered their



supper to be prepared and served in the best room, informing her that they intended to reside there for some time, and expected to have their meals served regularly every day when they were at home. They brought no luggage with them except what was contained in two large valises strapped to their saddles.

They remained in that house until spring. Their clothes were thrown out every week to be washed, and by their order a supply of fire-wood was constantly ready at their door. They did not always take the trouble to put the wood on their own fire, frequently calling on some one of the family to do it for them. One of them was a tory officer from Amboy, the other was an Englishman. Said the old man, "They lorded it over our house for that whole winter, and all we had to do was to obey them. There was no use in complaining or remonstrating. If we had done so, we would have been requited with a curse and a blow of their swords. I felt like poisoning them, and verily believe I should have done so if it had not been for fear of the consequences. They left us as unceremoniously as they came, without even a 'thank you' or a 'good-bye.'"

It is related of a young woman, the daughter of a farmer residing in the vicinity of the Fresh kills, while engaged one morning in boiling soap, two soldiers entered the kitchen and ordered her to prepare breakfast for them; she declined to do so, as she was otherwise engaged, and could not leave her employment to oblige anybody. This reply excited their wrath, and one of them approached her with an intention of striking her. Seizing a large dipper, she filled it with the boiling liquid and dashed it at him. Perceiving her intention, he wheeled suddenly around and thus saved his face, but received the whole charge upon the back of his head and neck. His companion, fearing a similar reception, escaped as quickly as possible, but the scalded ruffian, in endeavoring to remove the hot soap, took all the hair off with it, which never grew again, but left the back of his head bald ever after.

Another farmer in the same vicinity, while he and one of his sons were engaged in the barn one morning, was suddenly alarmed by a cry for help from the house. Each seizing a hay-fork, the farmer and his son ran in and found three soldiers in the house, one of whom was holding one of the young women by the arm. They both rushed at him, first one stabbed him





in the shoulder, and the other in the thigh, disabling him at once. With the same weapons they attacked the other two, driving them all before them out of the house, and pursuing them for some distance down the road.

The following romantic incident, though traditional, is well authenticated :

Forty years ago or more there stood an old stone house nearly on the site later occupied by the residence of Capt. R. Christopher, in West New Brighton. For many years before it was demolished it was owned and occupied by the late Nathaniel Britton, Jr., but the name of the occupant during the early years of the revolution had entirely escaped the memory of the narrator. He was, however, a prominent tory, and the father of a daughter said to have possessed more than an ordinary degree of personal attractions. Before the commencement of the war she was affianced to a young man named Mersereau, who resided at or near Holland's Hook. A young British lieutenant saw and admired her, and probably from the outset marked her for a victim. He succeeded in becoming acquainted with her, and to the gratification of her father, became very assiduous in his attentions. She, however, rejected his advances. After several months, finding he had utterly failed in impressing her with a sense of the honor of his alliance, he resolved to possess himself of her person, at all hazards. The same young tory who, on another occasion, betrayed Colonel Mersereau's presence with his family, and who, it would appear, was somewhat noted for his unscrupulousness, was applied to by the lieutenant. The plot agreed upon between them was carried into execution, with results as follows :

Almost directly opposite the junction of the road from Garretson's station with the old Richmond road, then called the King's highway, there is a deep ravine, penetrating some distance into Todt hill, at the farthest extremity of which there is a spring of water. Near this, before the war commenced, a solitary individual had built a rude cabin, in which he dwelt for several years, but when hostilities began he disappeared, leaving the cabin vacant. The approach to it was by a foot path through the dense forest which lined the hills on either side of the ravine. One evening the young tory called at the residence of the young lady, and informed her that he had been sent to convey her to the residence of her aunt, near Richmond,



who had been taken suddenly ill, and had requested her to come to her. Suspecting no evil, and being much attached to her relative, she was soon ready to accompany him. Springing into the wagon which he had brought, she was rapidly driven away. When they reached the entrance to the ravine, two men rushed out of the bushes, seized the horse by the bridle, and ordered the occupants of the wagon to alight. One of them pretended to take possession of the driver, while the other led the young lady up the foot-path into the ravine, cautioning her that her safety depended upon her silence.

So far the plot had been carried out successfully, but there was an avenger nearer than they suspected. They had taken but a few steps in the direction of the cabin, when several men rushed out of the bushes and seized the lieutenant, for it was he who had possession of the young lady. One of them took her hand, assuring her that they were her protectors, and that she need be under no apprehensions. Though they were all disguised, she at once recognized Mersereau by his voice. Those who had possession of the lieutenant proceeded to tie his hands, informing him that they intended to do no further harm than the infliction of a severe flogging; and if he attempted to cry out they would gag him. A bundle of supple rods was at hand, and two of them, one after the other, inflicted the chastisement which they had promised. Having punished him to their hearts' content, they released him, with the warning that if, after the expiration of a week, he was found on the island, they would capture him again and cut off his ears. The young lady was safely returned to her home by the same conveyance, but not the same driver, for he had, by some means, disappeared. The lieutenant also saved his ears by departure before the week expired. How the villainous plot was discovered was never positively known, but it was shrewdly suspected that the young tory had played a double part, and for a consideration had betrayed his military employer. The horse and wagon remained in the possession of Mersereau unclaimed for several weeks, but was finally stolen one night, and never heard of after.

There is an instance of extraordinary self-possession and prompt decision related of a young man named Housman, which probably saved his life. He resided in the vicinity of the Four Corners, and one morning, after a slight fall of snow during the night, he went out with his gun in quest of rabbits.



Though the people of the island, during its occupancy by the British, were prohibited from keeping fire-arms of any description in their houses, some few had succeeded in concealing guns, which, from the associations connected with them, or for some other reasons, were valuable to them. Such was the gun carried by young Housman on this occasion. While tramping through the woods, a sudden turn in the path brought him in sight of two soldiers, who were probably out on the same errand. They saw each other simultaneously, and each party stopped. The young hunter thought of the loss of his gun, and probably of his life also, but suddenly turning his back to the soldiers, he waved his hand as if beckoning to some other persons as he stepped back round the turn, and shouted out, "Hurry up, here are two Britishers; three of you go round to the right, and three to the left, and the rest of you follow me; hurry up, before they run away." What the "Britishers" had to fear we know not, but hearing these directions, and fearing there might be a small army about to surround them, they turned and fled, throwing away their arms to facilitate their flight. What report they made when they reached their quarters is not known, but a detachment was sent out to capture the young man and his army. Their surprise and mortification must have been extreme, when at the turn in the path they could only find the tracks of a single individual in the snow.

A farmer, whose name has passed into oblivion, residing "in the Clove," left home late one day, leaving only his wife and a lad of seventeen years at home. It was after dark before the boy completed his work about the barn, but just as he was coming out he saw a soldier enter the house with a musket in hand. Before he had time to reach the house he heard his mother shrieking for help. He rushed forward, and as he entered saw the soldier holding his mother by the throat with his left hand, while his right was drawn back to strike her. When he entered, the soldier had placed his musket by the side of the door in the passage; the son seized it, and at the risk of shooting his mother, levelled it at the ruffian's head and sent a ball crashing through his brain, killing him on the spot. But there was still cause for alarm. If the shot had been heard, and should attract any person to the spot, an exposure must necessarily follow and the lad would be executed, for no circumstances would be admitted as justification for killing a



soldier. Fortunately, however, the noise had not been heard, or at least had attracted no attention. All that could now be done was to conceal the body until the return of the husband and father in the morning. This was done by dragging it under the stairs, where it was not likely to be seen by any person but themselves. The next morning, when the farmer returned, he removed a part of his barn floor, under which he dug a grave; and after dark the evening following the body was thrown into it, and the musket also, and buried, and there they probably remain to this day. The family kept their own secret until after the close of the war, and the evacuation of the island by the British.

A man named Cole, residing in Southfield, was the proprietor of a remarkably fine gray horse. Several of the officers of the army had offered to purchase him, but he declined to part with him at any price. He had before sold a horse to an officer, who had promised to pay for him within two months, but two years had passed, and the debt was not yet discharged. At another time a Hessian officer, who had been quartered upon him for a short time, when he left, forcibly took away another horse, and Cole had repeatedly vowed that no other officer should have another horse of his unless he stole him; he would shoot him first—the horse, not the officer. Early one bright winter evening he heard a commotion in his stable, and, always on the alert, he thrust two pistols in his pockets and hastened out. At the stable door he saw two soldiers attempting to put a halter on the head of his favorite horse. “Hi, there,” he cried, “what are you going to do with that horse?” “Going to take him away,” replied one of them; “Colonel —— wants him, and sent us to get him.” “Well,” said Cole, “you just make up you minds that neither you nor the colonel shall take that horse away without my consent.” “Stand aside, you d—d rebel,” said one of them, as Cole attempted to take the horse from them, at the same time pointing a bayonet at him, “or I’ll make a hole through your heart.” Without farther reply, he drew one of his pistols and shot the horse through the head; “There, you infernal thieves,” he exclaimed as he threw the pistol down, “now you may take him.” For a moment the soldiers were amazed as they gazed on the struggles of the dying animal, but soon recovering themselves, they prepared to rush upon him with their bayonets, when Cole,





presenting the other pistol, exclaimed, "Come on, you thieves and robbers, with your bayonets, and I'll drop one of you at least." The soldiers considering discretion, in this instance, the better part of valor, turned and walked away, threatening him with the vengeance of the colonel. "Go tell your master," said Cole, as he followed them to the gate, "that I'll serve him, or you, or any other thief who comes upon my premises at night to steal my property, as I served that horse."

The majority of the English, of all ranks, regarded the colonists as physically, intellectually and morally inferior to themselves. In their social intercourse with them as well as in their plundering, they made but little distinction between loyalists and rebels. But there were some exceptions. Among the officers of the British army were some who were gentlemen by nature and by culture, and a few were eminently pious men, who found no difficulty in reconciling their obligations to their king with their duty to their Maker. These two latter classes were ever ready to listen to the complaints of the oppressed, and as far as lay in their power, to redress the wrongs of the injured.

Of this class was Captain John Voke, of whom the following anecdote has been preserved. He was billeted upon a farmer in the vicinity of Richmond for some two or three months, and, unlike many other officers, regularly paid for his board and lodging. A few days after he had removed his quarters, the farmer came to him and informed him that during the previous night his house had been entered and robbed of a sum of money, and that he suspected that it had been done by soldiers, because beneath the window through which the house had been entered, and which had been left open, he had found a button, by means of which, perhaps, the culprits might be detected. The captain took the button and promised to give the matter his immediate attention. The button indicated the regiment as well as the company to which the loser of it belonged. During the parade that same day, he closely scrutinized the company indicated, and found a soldier with a button missing on the front of his coat. After parade he communicated his suspicions to the colonel of the regiment, and the soldier was sent for. When he arrived, the colonel, using a little artifice, informed him that he suspected him of being implicated in a drunken brawl the night before at a tavern a mile or two distant. This



the soldier denied, saying that he could prove he was nowhere near that tavern, or even in that direction, during the night previous. "Were you out last night?" inquired the colonel; "Well--yes," answered the soldier, "but not in that direction." "Where were you?" "In various places, but not at that tavern." "By whom can you prove that you were not at that tavern?" The name of another soldier was mentioned, and the colonel sent for him. When he arrived, he corroborated all the first had said, adding that they two had been together all the night. "Then," said the colonel, "you two are the burglars who entered the house of Mr. ---- through a window last night, and robbed him of twenty guineas. Lay down the money upon this table, or you shall both be executed for burglary and robbery." The affrighted soldiers, taken by surprise, confessed their crime, and each placed ten guineas upon the table. What punishment was meted out to the culprits is not related, but Captain Voke had the satisfaction of returning the money to the owner thereof in less than twenty-four hours after it had been stolen.

Though there were, in the royal army, both among the English and Hessians, a great many idle, dissolute and very wicked men, officers as well as privates, there were also among them many exemplary and industrious men, some of whom were mechanics and some agriculturists. An army doing garrison duty has generally a good deal of idle time, which was employed by these men to their own profit and advantage. Shoemakers, for instance, frequently made boots and shoes for the officers and their families, when they had any, and for the citizens of the county; and were permitted to take their surplus work to the city to sell to dealers, for all of which they were generally well paid. The government supplying all their personal wants, the money thus earned accumulated until, at the close of the war, many had large sums at their command. It was generally this class who contrived to stay behind, purchase land, or commence business on their own account, sometimes, it is said, under assumed names. Some of the agriculturists obtained permission from the neighboring farmers to clear and cultivate an acre or two of land which the owners, in many instances, had considered worthless, because it was overgrown with bushes and briars, and would cost more to clear, as they said, than the land was worth. It is said that these industrious men literally made



the wilderness "blossom as the rose." By a thrifty system of culture which they applied they were able to produce, as a venerable informant declared, "more from a single acre than I could raise on five."

That there was no lack of patriots on the island during the war is shown by the following anecdote :

A man named Taylor—not of the Staten Island family of that name—came over from New York, and took up his abode here for the avowed purpose of trading with the English vessels. He carried on the business for several months openly, and in defiance of all the cautions he had received by means of anonymous letters, which he openly exhibited in public places, and held up to ridicule. He defied any power which the rebels possessed to prevent his doing as he pleased in the matter of trading with the ships. One very dark and stormy night, five men entered his dwelling unannounced. They were all disguised, and while a part of them seized and bound him, the remainder performed the same service for his wife. With pistols at their heads, they were cautioned to make no outcry. Having secured Taylor, they led him to his own barn, put a noose around his neck, threw the rope over one of the beams, and hoisted him from the floor by his neck ; then having fastened the rope to a post, left him and went their way.

His wife hearing the men depart, apprehended something serious had occurred, and made most desperate efforts to loose the thongs which bound her, and finally succeeded. Fortunately a lighted lantern stood in an adjoining room, which she seized and ran into the barn, where she found her worst apprehensions realized by seeing her husband struggling in the agonies of death. Finding she could not untie the knot around the manger post, she found a hatchet, with which she cut the rope and let him down upon the floor. Having removed the noose around his neck, and finding him insensible, she ran to a neighboring house for assistance, and at length succeeded in restoring him to consciousness. Two or three days afterward Taylor removed back again to New York, but he was accompanied by a guard of soldiers all the way to the city.

At some time between the cessation of actual hostilities and the evacuation by the British, the following incident is said to have occurred :

There were many ships of war lying at anchor in various



parts of the harbor, mostly in the vicinity of the city ; there were some, however, which lay in, and even beyond the Narrows, and these were anchored as near the shores of Long and Staten Islands, as could safely be done, for the convenience of easy access to the land in all conditions of the weather, in order that the officers might obtain supplies of butter, vegetables, etc., from the farms in the vicinity. One day a boy, some seventeen or eighteen years of age, was in search of some stray cattle in the woods near the water, and saw a ship's boat with two sailors approaching. Supposing he might as well keep out of their sight in that solitary place, he concealed himself behind a large tree ; he saw them land, and while one of them remained in charge of the boat, the other, with a basket in his hand, entered the wood. After having proceeded a few rods, until he was out of sight of his companion, and of everybody else, as he supposed, he took off his coat, knelt down at the foot of a large, gnarled tree, and, with an instrument resembling a mason's trowel, dug a hole in the earth, and having deposited something therein, carefully filled the hole again with earth, and laid a large flat stone upon it. This done he arose to his feet, and took a long and careful survey of the surroundings, then proceeded on his way. The youth kept in his place of concealment for two full hours, when he saw the sailor returning with his basket apparently filled with vegetables. He passed by the place where he had dug the hole, scrutinized it closely, and then proceeded to the boat, which was still in waiting for him, and returned to the ship. Assuring himself that the coast was clear, the young man went to the place, re-opened the hole, and found therein a heavy canvas bag, evidently containing, as he judged by its sound, a quantity of money. Securing the prize, and without waiting to re-fill the hole, he hastened away, and found some other place of deposit, known only to himself. A day or two thereafter posters were put up in every public place, offering a large reward for the recovery of three hundred guineas, which had been stolen from one of his majesty's ships, being the property of the government, and an additional reward for the detection of the thief, but the boy kept his own counsel. The theft occasioned a good deal of talk at the time, but it was soon forgotten in the excitement consequent upon the declaration of peace and the preparations for the departure of the British from the country.





For nearly four years the young man kept his own secret, at which time he had attained his majority; and then, when he purchased a farm for himself, and paid for it, did he first reveal, to his parents only, the manner in which he obtained his means.

During the whole time of their occupancy of the island the British kept a lookout on some convenient elevation for the arrival of vessels. At one time a sentinel was stationed in the top of "a large chestnut tree which grew upon the summit of the island, about a mile from a small wooden church which stood near the King's highway." There is a tradition confirmatory of this statement, which says that the British kept a number of soldiers on the top of Todt hill to guard the road and to keep a lookout over the land and water. From the locality indicated this might have been done very easily, for it commands a view of the outer bay and Sandy Hook in one direction, and the kills, and New Jersey beyond, in another. The sentinel in the tree was provided with a platform upon which to stand, and signals to elevate upon a pole lashed to the highest limb of the tree. This position was a perilous one in a heavy wind, and peculiarly so during a thunder storm. It is said that on one occasion a soldier on duty in that elevated place was overtaken by a sudden storm of rain, thunder and lightning. The ladder by which he had ascended was blown out of his reach, and he was unable to escape from the dangers which surrounded him. When the storm had passed away his body was found on the ground beneath the tree, with his neck broken; and certain livid marks on his person, together with the condition of the tree itself, indicated that he had been stricken by lightning and fallen to the ground. About a month afterward another storm passed over the same locality, and the lookout descended from his elevation as quickly as possible, but he had no sooner reached the ground than the tree was again struck, and he was killed at its foot. After that the place of lookout was changed, and brought down the hill nearer the church, probably in the vicinity of the light house. The following season the doomed tree was again struck, and riven to splinters.

An aged man named Britton, residing in Southfield, with his wife and granddaughter, a young lady about seventeen years of age, were seated before a bright fire on the hearth, one chilly



autumn evening. On a table stood a mug of cider, and in the fire was one end of a long iron rod, with which, after heating it, the old man was in the habit of "mulling" his cider, a beverage of which he partook every evening before retiring. While thus waiting the outer door suddenly opened and a huge Hessian soldier entered. After regarding the family group for a moment, he walked to the corner in which the young lady was sitting, and seated himself beside her. "Hey, missy," said he, attempting to put his arm around her waist, "how you like a big Dutchman for a husband, hey?" "Go away, you Dutch brute," said she. "Oh, no," he answered renewing his attempt at familiarity, "me not go away yet." "Go away," she repeated, "or I shall hurt you." Laughing at this threat he persisted in annoying her, until suddenly she stooped down, and seizing the iron rod, thrust the red hot end of it into his face. He uttered a yell, and in the effort to spring up, fell over his chair. She continued her assault upon him, by pushing the rod into any part of his person she could reach and when he regained his feet and made for the door, she continued to pursue him, even following him out of doors. He made repeated attempts to strike her, but her rod being longer than his arm, effectually prevented him from touching her. He also attempted to seize the rod, but it was too hot to hold, and every such effort only burned him the more. Foiled at every point, he turned and ran away.

During the war British officers were quartered at the house of a Mrs. Dissosway, near the present site of Tottenville. Her husband was a prisoner in the hands of the British. Captain Nathaniel Fitz Randolph, who was very troublesome to the British, was her brother. A tory colonel once promised to procure the release of her husband if she would prevail upon her brother to remain quietly at home and become a neutral party. "And if I could" she replied, with a look of scorn, at the same time drawing up her tall figure to its utmost height, "if I could act so dastardly a part, *think you that General Washington has but one Captain Randolph in his army?*"

On one occasion after the establishment of independence, it is related that several families of those who had suffered during the war were returning from a religious service in sleighs. As they approached the house of a certain tory captain, they all drew up in front, and Dissosway, the leader, went to the



front door and with the butt of his driving whip rapped. When his call was answered by the captain the former explained, "We stopped to let you know we rebels have been to church. It is *our* turn now to give thanks."

A Mrs. Jackson resided on the island during the war. Her husband was for nine months in the provost, and for two years afterward on parole. During his absence the house was the abode of British officers and soldiers. One day this resolute woman caught a soldier carrying her tin milk pail through the house to take it to his master, who wished to bathe his feet in it. Seizing the pail and tearing it from his grasp she fearlessly retorted, "Not for your master's master shall you touch what you have no business with." This lady used to send provisions to the American army on the opposite shore. To do this the utmost secrecy was required. To avoid suspicion she would often set her husband's mill going and attend to it herself while the black man who usually performed that service left his work to go across the river with provisions. One day she kept a fatted calf muzzled under her bed all day to send it to the Americans at night. On one occasion she received intelligence that the Americans were coming to surprise and capture the British who were lodged in her house. She gave no warning to the latter till the whig force was just at hand; then, not wishing to have a bloody contest in her house, she told them the whigs were coming. "Run, gentlemen, run, or you are all prisoners." They did run, without ceremony, but the whigs were upon them.

After Jackson's return the house was robbed. A knock was heard at the door one night, and on opening it a disguised man appeared, with a pistol which he placed at the head of Mr. Jackson and enjoined silence under pain of instant death. A little daughter standing by involuntarily screamed out, when one of the ruffians struck her a blow on the head, which laid her insensible on the floor. The house was then stripped of whatever articles the thieves desired to take away. Their path next morning could be traced by the articles they had dropped by the way in their haste as they departed. The family believed they were a band of tories, who were often more cruel and rapacious than the British soldiers.

The following incident is related as being one of the most daring exploits of the revolution. A colonel of the American



army having been taken prisoner, and there being no British officer of a similar grade in their possession with whom to redeem him, three men entered upon the perilous enterprise of taking a colonel from the very midst of the enemy then stationed on Staten Island. They crossed the sound on a dark night, and approached the house where several officers were located, but found it strongly guarded. Proceeding with the utmost caution they were able to evade the guard in the darkness, and approaching the house took their stand near a window, through which they could see what was going on within. Watching a favorable opportunity they entered the house, and placing a pistol to the breast of a colonel they ordered him to march out as their prisoner, threatening to shoot him in case he made the least noise or resistance. They took him away from his companions, out through the guard by which the house was encircled, and delivered him safely in Elizabethtown by sunrise the next morning. One of the men who performed this daring feat was Henry Willis, who died about forty years since, but of the names of the other two we are ignorant.

The murder of Stephen Ball and its attendant circumstances are so intimately associated with Staten Island that we may be excused for introducing here an account of the matter. Ball was in the habit of supplying some of the British on Staten Island with such beef and other provisions as he had to sell. Upon one occasion a tory sent out from the British as a spy, had been taken by the Americans, tried by a regular court martial and, being found guilty, was hung. One Hetfield, the leader of a notorious band of ruffians, vowed vengeance by retaliation, and the next time Ball came to the island they seized him. This was in January, 1781. He was taken before General Patterson, and then before General Skinner, charged with being a spy, but they both knew his mission on the island and refused to try him, directing his release. The Hetfield gang, however, were determined to execute their threats of vengeance, and accordingly, after robbing him of whatever valuable articles he had with him, took him over to Bergen Point and there hung him to a tree. This act of independent violence appears to have been deprecated by the British authorities as well as the Americans, from the fact that the victim was acting no partisan character, but simply engaged in a commercial transaction. The party engaged in it consisted of Cornelius,





John, Smith, Job and James Hetfield, Elias and Samuel Mann and Job Smith, all of New Jersey.

At the close of the war, Staten Island, New York island, and a part of Long Island, were peculiarly circumstanced; throughout the country the several state governments, and the minor county and town governments under them had been organized, and were in full operation, except in the counties mentioned; these had been under the control of the British military authorities, and whatever civil government they had continued to be under the English laws; any attempt to organize a government which had the least tincture of republicanism would not have been tolerated a moment; therefore, when the English evacuated the country, the government which had directed its destinies for a century, was, so far as these counties were concerned, annihilated as it were in a day, and the people, without any previous instruction or experience, were suddenly brought under the influences of a new code of laws. It would be interesting to trace the steps taken by the people of the island to acclimate themselves to the political atmosphere which they were thereafter to inhale, but here the resources fail.

In proportion to its population, Perth Amboy contained more Tories than any other place within the limits of the state of New Jersey. Many of them enlisted in the regiment known as the Queen's Rangers, and in the several companies composing Colonel Billop's regiment. We have been able to obtain the names of but two of the captains of the companies, viz.: Abraham Jones, a native Staten Islander, and David Alston, an Englishman or Scotchman by birth, but for years before the war a resident of New Jersey, in the vicinity of Rahway, and, after the war, of Staten Island. Many of the British officers, in all parts of the country, remained after the cessation of hostilities, but many more of the rank and file. This was particularly so on Staten Island, and many of the families now residing here are the descendants of these officers and soldiers. There were not as many Tories on the island at the close as at the beginning of the war.

It is, after all, a doubtful matter whether there were many of the people on Staten Island who were really Tories from principle. The Seaman and Billop families, and two or three others not quite so prominent, were all beneficiaries of the British government; they were the proprietors of large and valuable



estates bestowed upon them for merely nominal consideration; they were also the incumbents of lucrative offices, which gave them a power and an influence which otherwise they would not have possessed. The British officers, both of the army and navy, were lavish of their gold, and the people of the island, so far as money was concerned, were never in better circumstances. The temptation then to infringe the resolutions of the provincial congress, prohibiting all intercourse with the vessels of the enemy, was irresistible, more especially as the congress was powerless to enforce its own ordinances, or to punish the infraction of them.

The injustice and cruelty of the British during the war, and the frequent disrespect of their own promises, often repeated, as well as the inhumanity with which they treated the American prisoners who fell into their hands, had caused many to regret the step they had taken in publicly advocating the cause of the crown, and gradually they became converts to the cause of their native country, so that when the end came, there were few left who declined to take the oath of allegiance to the new government, and fewer still who were so infatuated with royalty as to abandon their property and the land of their nativity, to follow its fortunes. Of this latter class we have been able to find but two families, the Billops and the Seamans. The property of these families was confiscated and sold by Isaac Stoutenburgh and Philip Van Courtland, commissioners of forfeiture for the Southern district of New York. On the 16th day of July, 1784, they sold to Thomas McFarren, of New York, the Manor of Bentley, containing  $850\frac{1}{2}$  acres for £4,695 (\$11,737.50) forfeited to the people of this state by the attainder of Christopher Billop. The boundaries given in this conveyance are as follows: "Bounded southerly by the Bay or water called Prince's Bay, westerly by the river that runs between the said Land and Amboy, Northerly partly by the Land of Jacob Reckhow and partly by the road, and Easterly partly by the road and partly by the Bay." The land was then occupied in different parcels by different individuals as follows: 373 acres by Samuel Ward; 200 acres by Albert Ryckman; 50 acres by John Manner; 50 acres by Edmund Wood; 50 acres by Andrew Prior; 25 acres by James Churchward;  $67\frac{1}{2}$  acres by Benjamin Drake;  $23\frac{1}{2}$  acres by Joseph Totten; and  $11\frac{1}{2}$  acres by Jacob Reckhow.



On the same day, the same commissioners sold to the same individual, for £1,120.16 (\$2,802), about eighty acres of land in the town of Castleton, consisting of eight lots, all bounded southerly by "a road leading from the Rose and Crown to Dongan's Mill," which tract of land was forfeited by the attainder of Benjamin Seaman.

On the 30th day of April, 1785, the same commissioners sold to Cornelius C. Roosevelt, of New York, two hundred acres of land, more or less, for £3,000 (\$7,500), forfeited to the people of this state by the attainder of Benjamin Seaman, the same being then in the possession of Paul Micheau.



OLD BRITISH FORT.

The policy of the government of the United States appears always to have been of a pacific and conciliatory character toward its enemies, after they had been subdued and rendered powerless for evil. All tories, as well as foreign foes, were permitted to take a position among the citizens of the country upon taking the oath of allegiance. All animosities were buried, and the descendants of a great number of these repentant royalists, now residing on the island, are ignorant of the position their ancestors took in the great political questions which agitated the country a century ago.

Some marks of the British occupancy of the island have remained to designate the localities of their encampments and



the scenes of some of their active operations. One of the most conspicuous of these evidences is the old fort which occupies a commanding hill to the west of Richmond. The site overlooks the valley in which mainly lies the village. The embankment encloses a space about fifty feet square and is situated near the brow of a hill which descends by a steep slope nearly three hundred feet to the salt marshes which lie at the base. The earth works, now beaten down by the ravages of a century, are still several feet in height, in the form of a square, facing the three directions in which the hill overlooks the surrounding country, while the entrance to the fort was from the fourth side, on the northwest, where the natural grade renders approach easy.

More than thirty years ago Major Howard found a considerable excavation in or under the hill that rises just west of Nautilus Hall at Tompkinsville. Being anxious to know its origin, he made numerous inquiries but without success until he was referred to an old black man, about eighty years of age, who, on being shown to the spot, explained that it was the saw pit where the British sawed timber for their barracks. The negro had often seen them engaged in that work. The hills were covered with a thick growth of heavy white oak timber which the British cut away, and subsequently pine and cedar came in and occupied the ground. The British had here a cantonment for seven thousand men extending along the foot of the hill and up the ravine partially followed by the present course of Arietta street. The timber was cut down to build these barracks. The troops were here for seven years, and as the old black man remarked, "On fine days and in summer the hills would be just covered with the red coats."

As late as 1832 the remains of some of the dwelling places of the Hessian soldiers were distinctly to be seen along the Richmond road, at the foot of the hill in the rear of Stapleton. These consisted of excavations in the side of the hill, eight or ten feet square, which had been covered with planks or pieces of timber, upon which earth or sods were placed to form roofs. The fronts had been boarded up, and probably the sides. How they had been warmed in winter or whether they had been warmed at all was not apparent. They must have been miserably dark, damp caves, but probably, in the opinion of their English masters, good enough for Dutch mercenaries.





In closing this chapter of revolutionary history, we can perhaps give no more lifelike pictures of those times in general than may be gathered from the substance of interviews with living witnesses who gave their impressions and recollections of many scenes and events that passed under their notice. The facts gathered at a few such interviews with persons then living at advanced ages, but now long since dead, were noted down by Professor Charles Anthon, more than thirty years ago—about the years 1850 to 1853; and from the notes of those interviews we have condensed the most interesting items referring to the revolution, in the following paragraphs. These facts are given as nearly as may be to the manner and form of their development in the interview, without regard to any order in matters of time or topic, or even harmony of statement.

From a conversation with Captain Blake, March 15, 1851: He was about 13 years old when the British landed. It was three or four days before any of them were seen where he lived. Then four soldiers came along and said they wanted something to eat. When they had finished they each threw down a half dollar, to the great surprise of the people. The soldiers in general behaved at first very well, paying for everything that they took, but when they came back from Jersey they stole everything they could lay their hands on. In general the people were well treated. Fifteen pence was the price for a dozen eggs. The currency used was principally English. Dollars passed for 4s. 6d. The soldiers were very liberal. All the vacant buildings were occupied by them. At Ryers' there was a "Fives' Court," a kind of game at which the British officers spent a great deal of time in playing. During this time a man by the name of Housman occupied the old Dongan manor house. The Hessians wore large whiskers, coming up to the corners of the mouth. He once saw two Hessians receive two hundred lashes apiece. They used to come around and buy cattle. The Forty-second regiment lay in Bodine's orchard. They were Scotch and wore the Highland uniform. The Hetfields were all robbers. There were several brothers of them. They frequently brought over thirty or forty head of cattle from Jersey to the British. On one occasion they threw a man into a hog-pen and required him to eat corn. On his refusal to do so they took him out and hammered his toe-nails off.



Decker's house was on the site of the Port Richmond hotel (now St. James). It was of brick. At the time of the invasion under Sullivan the Americans burned it. The Dutch church was burned on the same occasion. Mr. Blake's father was crossing the mill-dam, and when he reached the west side he came all at once among the Americans. They remained there until the British troops appeared with light-horse. They fired and killed a light-horseman, then ran away through the woods like so many frightened horses.

From an interview with Rev. Dr. Van Pelt, June 5, 1851 : A man stopped at his house about the year 1804, he then living in the Port Richmond hotel. That man said he was in the engagement at the Dutch church. The weather was cold, but the heat of the action caused them to sweat profusely. The church, which was like a hay-stack in form, was completely riddled by balls. Dr. Van Pelt said that when the war broke out there were two other Dutch churches on the island ; one in Westfield and another at Richmond. The latter had just been completed when the war broke out. It was a frame building, and the British used it gradually up for firewood. Judge Micheau was a witness of this, but was afraid to say anything, lest he should be suspected of disaffection. The few on the island who were attached to the American cause belonged generally to the Dutch church. Many persons living here professed attachment to the British, but secretly sent very valuable information to General Washington. A Mr. Latourette was engaged in carrying wood to the city during the hard winter of 1779-80, as long as a passage remained open, and would often enable American officers detained as prisoners in the sugar house to escape. It was necessary for every one who wished to leave the city to present himself to General Howe for permission to do so. Latourette would go before the general with these officers in disguise, and say, "General, I have brought you a fine load of wood, and am going directly down for more ; I have some countrymen here who would like to go with me." The general would give them a hasty look and say, "Let them all pass." Then they would go aboard the boat and make sail for Staten Island. At the mouth of the kills an armed vessel was stationed to examine all boats that passed, but Latourette being well known was allowed to pass without examination under the plea that he was in a hurry to bring another load of wood to General Howe.



So having the officers secreted in the vessel he was able to land them safely where they could easily effect their escape.

From an interview with Mrs. Bird, November 22, 1851, she then being 91 years of age :—She was 15 years old when the British landed. They landed mostly at Van Buskirk's dock. As they were landing they interchanged rifle shots with the Americans on the opposite shore of the kills. The first she saw of the British was a body of Highlanders who came marching up into the Clove (where she was living), from the direction of Van Duzer's ferry in quest of lodging. Some of them were quartered in their barn. She lived with her adoptive father, Thomas Seaman, whose house at that time was the first one on the left, as you turn out of the clove road into the Little Clove. General Knyphausen was a very fine looking man and used to ride a great white horse. The Hessians were all fine looking men. Their dress was nearly all blue, and both dress and accoutrements were very heavy. Some wore beards and some did not. During the war the people along the north shore did not dare to burn lights at night, even in cases of sickness or other extreme need, lest they should be suspected of showing signals to the rebels. People in general had to be very discreet, and keep their mouths shut. "Parson Charlton" of St. Andrew's church wore a very white wig. The "Rose and Crown" was a public house during the war, and the headquarters for that part of the island. The "Black Horse" was also a tavern then. The Queen's Rangers were then stationed at the point since called the "Telegraph." There was a Presbyterian meeting house in the west quarter, which the British first converted into a hospital and then destroyed.

From an interview with Mr. Isaac Simonson, December 26, 1851, he being 90 years of age :—The camp on Staten Island before the revolution, to which the troops came on their return from Canada, in the time of the French war, was at the quarantine or watering place. At the time of the revolution, General Howe, within a few days after landing, employed Isaac Decker, a noted man and a great friend of the British, who was a captain of the light horse, to go all over the island and direct the farmers who were willing to dispose of their cattle or sheep, of which there were a great number on the island, to drive them to the watering place. None were taken by force. When the farmers had brought them they were all paid by the officer



whose duty it was to attend to that business. When these cattle arrived at the watering place they were turned into the fields of the "Glebe," among the young oats and wheat, and mowing grass. Guards were stationed to watch them, as the fences were all destroyed, not a rail being left in three months. At that time things were very cheap. After the British came prices more than doubled.

The next day after the British landed, Mr. Simonson, with some other boys, went down to what is now Port Richmond to see them. They landed during the night. When the fleet approached the Lower bay they anchored outside of Sandy Hook to wait for pilots to bring them in. The same Isaac Decker, before mentioned, was a fisherman, and with others of the same occupation who accompanied him, went down and brought in the ships. Decker piloted them to a landing place, and landed himself in the first boat. The spot was called the "White Rock." The exploit made Decker suddenly famous in a local way. The church at Port Richmond had eight corners and then went up high to a balcony, above which was a steeple which contained a bell. The sides were shingled from the ground up. The soldiers lived in it. The building finally blew down, no one being in it at the time. The Isaac Decker spoken of lived in the house known as Decker's which was burned at the time of Sullivan's invasion. At that time the Americans burned this house and three vessels, also Dongan's or John Bodine's barn, in which the British had a hospital, which was afterward rebuilt after the same model and on the same foundation, by John C. Dongan. When the Americans had got out of the woods and on the meadows they halted, while the forts on the Jersey side near Elizabethtown fired on the British, who were still on the upland and had no cannon. Cole's ferry was the same as Van Duzer's and Darby Doyle's.

After the revolution all about the quarantine grounds was commons. Colonel Billop was a tall, slim man. His father-in-law, Seaman, owned a large tract in the manor, off which he sold the wood. Toward the latter part of the revolution he had teams cutting and carting there. The inhabitants commonly worked on the roads on Saturdays. One very warm day Mr. Isaac Simonson remembered working in company with others on the road that runs down from Four Corners to the north side, when Colonel Billop and Colonel Seaman came along, riding on





horseback. They stopped and chatted with the road-master, and gave something to the men, as was then customary, but the men were dissatisfied with the smallness of the gift.

John and Peter Latourette lived at Fresh kill. They were great patriots, and when the British came, fled to Jersey, whence they used to make visits in whale-boats to the island. Many of the inhabitants of the island were placed in confinement by the British, on account of being whigs. Among these were Hezekiah and Abraham Reckhow, brothers of Mr. Simonson's wife's mother. They were both at first confined in the guard-house in the fort at Dr. Westervelt's, but her father succeeded in getting the former out, as he was subject to fits. Abraham was taken from the guard-house to the prison ship, "Jersey," where he suffered greatly. Mrs. Peter Woglam was put into the same guard-house for standing up for her husband, but having friends on the other side who interceded for her, she was released. Those Staten Islanders who were thus confined were principally from the west quarter (Westfield). The guard-house mentioned was very dark and partly under ground. General Skinner lived within or about a hundred yards north from the fort. The British had redoubts all along the heights. There were no prisoners kept at the fort that was located near the site of the pavilion. The property at the entrance of the kills was occupied by Judge Ryers as a farm before the war. He sold it to Buskirk. It was not a regular ferry till the war, when one Mackatee hired it.

Joshua Mersereau was the first militia colonel on Staten Island. The old colonel was no friend to the British, but to his country. The enemy were after him two or three times. He had notice of their coming and hid himself in a swamp. The Hetfields were a rough set of men "and feared neither God nor Devil." Cornelius, their leader, held a major's commission from the British. They accused Ball of being one of those who killed Long. Ball was a trader who brought things such as poultry, beef, and the like from the Jersey side. The Hetfield's caught him and took him to Mackatee's. They took him at Squire Merrill's, and intending at first only to make a prize of his wagon load of beef, poultry, etc., they told him to go on and they would follow with his wagon, but he would not leave it. They took him to General Skinner, at the fort at the Narrows, but he would have nothing to do with him, but told



them, "He is your prisoner; do what you please with him." They took him across the kills; got a table from Ham Britton's at the mill on this side; placed the table under a big tree and stood Ball upon it; then, having fastened a noose about his neck and tied it to a limb, they kicked the table from beneath his feet and hung him till he was dead. Mrs. Simonson saw it from the Staten Island side. Jake Hetfield kicked the table from under the feet of Ball. They all belonged to Jersey, except one called "Tow-head Jim," who was also born in Jersey, but served his time as a ship-carpenter on Staten Island. Long was the man who was hove into the hog-pen. He was on the British side, and was caught in Jersey. John and Cornelius Hetfield were both afterward tried for the murder of Ball, but neither was condemned. The Hetfields were not all brothers. Cornelius was an only son. He was a fine looking man, with dark hair, fair skin, and fine, ivory-like teeth. His father was very rich, and Cornelius was either brought up a minister, or at any rate received a fine education. He was very active and strong, and he would preach and pray like a minister. (The name is spelled sometimes Hetfield and sometimes Hatfield.) He had one sister, who married a man by the name of Blanchar. The large property which his father left to Cornelius Hetfield was transferred to his brother-in-law to prevent its confiscation.

The night when Hetfield and his party burned the church in Elizabethtown they came back and had a meeting in the large mill at Port Richmond. They went in there and Hetfield preached a sermon, and prayed like a minister. Hilliker bought this old mill, which was a large building containing a dwelling house, and had two runs of stone. It afterward caught fire and burned down. Hilliker built a smaller one in place of it, and that was burned, after which another was built. Daniel Selter was a great friend of the American cause. He was almost the first settler at Fayetteville, and built a public house there and cleared away the woods during the revolution. Col. Aaron Cortelyou kept a store where Edward Taylor since lived. It was this store that the negro Anthony Neal broke into, or was accused of breaking into and was hung for the offense.

From an interview with Mr. Peter Wandel, January 8, 1853: When the British first landed on the island they destroyed all the fences, and when they went to Jersey proclamation was



made to put them up again, but when they returned they destroyed them again. The forts abandoned by the British were never occupied by American soldiers. The buildings that were in them were afterward gradually removed. There were barracks, and in the fort at the Narrows there was a magazine under ground, made of timbers laid very close together, like a wall. This was built a year or two before the end of the war. After the evacuation of New York city by the British they made no stay on the island. They left things here in a very damaged state. All was commons about the quarantine grounds. Cornelius Hetfield was a noble looking fellow, but capable of doing almost anything. He was, probably, not under General Skinner's command, but a kind of commander himself. He ought to have been hung. He, however, went to Nova Scotia after the war. Smith Hetfield was a great bully. The refugee post on Bergen Point was opposite to Port Richmond. There was a whole company there. Wandel once came near being made a prisoner by Hyler. He was with others on the banks fishing when Hyler, with his party in three boats, came upon them and took several of them. He probably would have taken the whole fleet of twenty-two fishing boats had it not been for the interference of an armed schooner that happened to pass.

An appeal was afterward made to the governor, and he sent down a gun boat, and the next time they went down to fish the gun boat kept Hyler off. When Stirling came upon the island Peter Wandel, then a youth, served in the fort that stood back of Dr. Westervelt's, as a volunteer for the occasion. For this his father gave him a good whipping. Stirling could have taken all the forts in half an hour had he known their weakness and scantiness of provisions and ammunition. But instead of doing this he strung his troops all over the island. They were extended all along the heights, the snow being four feet deep, and the weather intensely cold. The light horse went along the north shore in pursuit of them, and took some prisoners, but not many. No reinforcements came to the forts that day, but subsequently two hundred sleighs came down, and Ned Beattie, one of the Hetfield gang, availed himself of the opportunity to bring down a barrel of rum. The route they followed in coming down from the city was first to cross from the Battery to Powle's hook, and then come down over the flats and along



the Jersey shore, and cross the kills from Bergen Point, taking Shooter's island on the way.

The village of Richmond in the time of the war was generally called Cuckold's town. Todt hill was not so called before the war, but the name began to be used during the latter part of the war. Decker's ferry was afterward called Ryers', and still later Mersereau's. Opposite to it was a house called Duffy's ferry, on the Bergen Point side. The wood cut by the British during the war was chiefly from the hills behind quarantine, which were covered with all kinds of timber. Between Old Town and New Dorp it was very wild, with scattered trees and huckleberry bushes. There was heavy timber all around Fresh pond. The riflemen from Virginia were very fond of fresh water fish, and would make a raft of rails upon which they would go out on the pond and catch cat fish and very large eels. The cat fish sometimes weighed eight or ten pounds apiece.

Wandel, when a boy, went to school to Mr. Rogers, in a small one-story house that stood just above the Port Richmond church; afterward taught by Mr. Riley, and moved to a point near the dock. His father's house was a short distance east of the Snug Harbor site. He stood at the door of his father's house and saw Hetfield's party engaged in hanging Ball on a tree on Peter Buskirk's farm. The night the British arrived his family was up in the clove, his father having removed them all thither through fear of the troops, but being assured of safety they all returned the next day. The British turned their horses in upon the growing crops on the farm. No compensation was ever received for it. At that time then there were not over nine houses between Van Duzer's and Richmond. When the fleet came up to Prince's bay the children all went up into the garrets to look out to see the ships come in. All the people in the neighborhood immediately got fresh provisions ready and killed great numbers of their young cattle. The English came ashore to purchase these articles.

After the ships had come to at quarantine, the sailors took the sails off, and made tents of them for some of the soldiers. The encampment extended from New Brighton to Stapleton. In all the space occupied by them, in a short time there was not a blade of grass to be seen. Everything was trodden down by the troops, who were kept "forever marking time." Before





the arrival of the main body of troops three vessels kept cruising in the waters about Staten Island. These were, in the order of their size, the "Asia," the "Phoenix" and the "Savage," the last being a sloop. At this time there were on the island a body of New England troops stationed at the Narrows and another of Virginia riflemen, among whom were some men sixty years of age. These were billeted among the farmers on the north side. The British vessels stopped at the watering place to get water one day, the "Savage" lying quite close to the shore, while six or seven of her men were engaged in getting water. The Virginia riflemen heard of it, and taking Peter Wandel's father for a guide, started for the spot. They rushed upon the sentinel so suddenly that he had not time to fire before he was seized and made a prisoner. As they continued their course down the hill they were seen from the sloop and fired upon by those on board. The riflemen protected themselves behind rocks and trees as well as they could, and none were hurt by the fire. The men who were getting water ran into the stream up to their chins, but being ordered to come out under pain of death, they obeyed, and all were taken prisoners. One of the men on board the "Savage" went up into her "round top" with a blunderbuss, but the riflemen shot him off. The British were prevented from getting water on this occasion. This was the first blood shed in the war in this quarter. On the American side none were injured except Neddy Beattie, who heard the firing and took a walk over the hill to see what was going on. He was struck by a spent ball, but without receiving any serious wound.

There were three forts during the war near the Watering Place, one near where the pavilion now stands, one at the "Marble house," and one behind Dr. Westervelt's. Colonel Billop was accounted very clever, a large, stout, noble looking man. He pretty much governed the island during the war. Some robbers from Jersey plundered a Mrs. Marshall who lived near Rossville. She had a mare and colt. They took the former but left the latter. The next morning the mare came home again, swimming across the sound. During the war little "bush shops" were frequent all over the island. Their whole stock in trade consisted of rum and a gill cup. The latter having no handle the dealer would put his thumb in it to hold on by and at the same time lessen the quantity required to fill it.



From a conversation with Mr. Dissosway, December 26, 1850: There was an encampment of British soldiers in Edwards' orchard, on the Shore road corner toward New Brighton. In making excavations while erecting one of the buildings on this property an entire skeleton was dug up. From time to time several baskets full of bones have been uncovered at the same place. It was the custom to send the invalid soldiers of the British army to Staten Island. There was another encampment at Belmont's hill, where the Hessians lived underground. The Port Richmond hotel, or the building that occupied its site and was the property of Judge Ryers, a leading tory, was the scene of a great deal of fun during the revolution. Ryers was the grandfather of Dissosway. He made a fortune out of the British. He was a contractor for supplies to the British troops. The Americans would drive their cattle over from Jersey to be sold. These would be kept at the slaughter-house, which was near Bard's. The Americans would come over at night, steal the cattle and sell them again to Ryers, who never said anything. He was a man of large size and great business tact. His first wife was killed by fright at the landing of the British.

From a conversation with a Mrs. Blake, who had been a Miss Merrill: She was born near Bull's Head. There were a number of Americans who came over from the Jersey shore one day and were making merry at a drinking house. An English officer who was staying at her father's house appeared at dinner with his ruffles all bloody. He explained that he had killed half a dozen drunken Americans. She recollected seeing a negro woman covering one dead body with brush.

Captain Blake said: Bodine's mill was the third one erected on that spot. During the war the Scotch Forty second regiment was quartered in Dongan's orchard. The Hessians lived near about the "marble house," in caves. He had visited them in their underground habitations to get the money for a beef which had been run through by them. They were fed on slices of pork, and rum with sugar shaken up in it, which later they called "Schnaps."

From a conversation with Mr. Peter Jacobsen, October 18, 1851: His grandfather, Christian Jacobsen, was killed in his own house by the British. Four soldiers came at night, when he was in bed. They entered the kitchen and aroused the blacks, demanding to know where their master kept his money,



and threatened to kill them if they did not tell. An old black woman passed by a secret route to the room of Mr. Jacobsen and aroused him. He opened the kitchen door and asked what the noise was about, whereupon one of the soldiers returned some insolent reply and at the same time fired upon him. The ball entered his side and he died in a few hours. The soldiers were made known to the officers, and the man who did the firing was hung.



## CHAPTER VI.

### UNDER THE REPUBLIC—1783 TO 1883.

Condition at close of Revolution.—Population.—County Buildings.—Manners and Customs.—War of 1812.—Extracts from the Records.—The Militia.—Growth and Improvement.—Earthquakes.—Quarantine.—The Civil War.—Some Notable Events.

WE come now to the history of a period of almost uniform prosperity and advancement, with perhaps varying degrees at different times, but with no more such eras of devastation as that which we have been reviewing. Returning peace found the island in a demoralized state of desolation. But the sunshine of peace quickened its capabilities into new life. We see it now as a new era of prosperity has dawned upon the land. The clouds have rolled away and the vigorous youth of a new government, set out to run the race of its existence, fills the prospect with cheering promises.

The whigs who had left their homes and property at the beginning of the war now returned and began the work of rebuilding the places that had been laid waste. The condition in which they found their property need not be described. It was what may readily be imagined as the result of seven years' occupancy by a lawless military force and frequent raids of plunderers from abroad. But the town organizations were re-established and the wheels of government gradually set in motion.

It would be interesting to note the manner of doing this, but the records are too scanty to give us much knowledge.

On the 26th day of September, 1775, there was a court of common pleas and general sessions held at the court house, in Richmond town, after which there is no record of any court having been held in the county until Monday, the 3d day of May, 1784, "being the first Court held after the Declaration of Independence being published." This court was held at the house of Thomas Frost, the court house having been burned by the British, David Mersereau, Esq., being judge.





The first case on the record is entitled, “*The State vs. Thomas Frost.*” The grand jury brought in a bill of indictment against the defendant for profanity, “and the Deft. being in Court was called and the Indictment Read to him.—Whereupon he pleaded not guilty and entered into recognizance himself in twenty pounds and Peter Mersereau his security in ten pounds to appear at the next Session to Try the Traverse.” Unfortunately there is no record of the result of this indictment. The next court whose proceedings are recorded was held in September, 1794.

It may be a matter of interest to know the names of the officers of the first court held under the new government; they are as follows: David Mersereau, Esq., judge; Cornelius Mersereau, Hendrick Garrison, Peter Rezeau, Anthony Fountain, John Wandel, Gilbert Jackson and Lambert Merrill, associate judges; Abraham Bancker, Esq., sheriff; Jonathan Lewis, coroner; Daniel Salter, James McDonald, John Baker and Abraham Burbanck, constables. The first act was to read the commissions of the several officers. The first civil suit on the calendar was Richard Housman against Henry Perine. Trespass, damages £50.

Subsequent to this the courts of this county were regulated by the following act of the state legislature passed February 5, 1787:

“Be it enacted,” &c.

“That the Courts of Common Pleas and General Sessions of the Peace, in and for the County of *Richmond*, shall be held at the Court-House in the same County, on the fourth Monday in *January*, the first Monday in *May*, and the fourth Monday in *September*, in every year, and may continue and be held until the several Saturdays next following, inclusive.”

It is probable that in the work of restoring order and improvement to the desolated farms and homesteads the surplus energies of the people were so much engaged that they had little time for unnecessary litigation. A paper of May 9, 1788, contains the following item:

“A correspondent observes, much to the credit of the inhabitants of Staten-Island, that the courts of general session, and common pleas, on that Island, county of Richmond, held on the 5th instant, in four hours after their convening, adjourned to September term, not having found a single bill of indictment,



or a recognizance, presented.—Who, *except lawyers*, would not wish to become a resident in so virtuous a community?"

A record under date December 1, 1789, contains the following accounts:

“To Richard Scarret for digging a Grave £0. 10. 0

“To Lewis Dey for Boarding the Carpenters when repairing the County House & Building the Gallows & Furnished 100 shingles 1 Bushel of Lime a pair of hinges & For fetching Anthony Cornish from New York Goal fees &c &c £6. 0. 0

“To Lewis Ryerss [then sheriff] for two locks for the Goal, for going to New York for to Report Anthony Cornishes Escape from Goal, for Going to New York when he was apprehended, for Fetching him from New York, Making the Gallows & Executing of Anthony Cornish, for Expence of Apprehending of sd Cornish at New York, Goal costs £16. 16. 0”

“We have been unable to find a more detailed account of this case. A very aged man, living when this was written (1875) and nine years old at the time of the execution, and who remembered it well, said that the prisoner was known as ‘Black Antony,’ being a negro; he had committed a murder on board of a vessel in the sound. The place of execution was near the site of the present school house in Richmond village.”

The explanation above is that made by Mr. Clute. We have in another chapter given an account of the execution of a negro, which corresponds so nearly in some points with the above as to make it quite probable that it was the same case. But if such is true, there are differences enough to make one or the other inaccurate. As we have not the means at hand to decide which is the correct one, we leave them both for the judgment of others to decide.

“Oct. 19: 1790. The following is the amount of the Inhabitants of the county of Richmond as numbered by the Supervisors and Assessors of said county Agreeable to an Act of the Legislature passed the 18th day of February 1790.

	<i>Males.</i>	<i>Females.</i>	<i>Slaves.</i>
Town of Southfield	309	330	258
Town of Westfield	440	451	267
Town of Northfield	463	409	167
Town of Castleton	381	340	127
Souls in Richmond Co.	—	—	—
In all 3942	1593	1530	819”



The growth of the county in population during the decades from that time to the present is as follows:—1790, 3,838; 1800, 4,564; 1810, 5,347; 1820, 6,135; 1830, 7,082; 1840, 10,965; 1850, 15,061; 1860, 25,492; 1870, 33,029; 1880, 38,991.

The following extract from the records tells its own story of the preliminary steps toward building a new court house.

“July 7: 1792 At a meeting of the Supervisors Together with the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas for the County of Richmond the 26th of June 1792 Lawrence Hillyer, Joseph Barton Jun. were unanimously appointed Commissioners to Superintend the Building of a Court House in the Town of Richmond on a Lott of ground given by Doctor Thomas Frost,



HOUSE OF ISAAC M. MARSH, FORMERLY USED AS  
THE COURT HOUSE.

and Thomas Frost having since been appointed a Commissioner to be with the said Lawrence Hillyer and Joseph Barton to Superintend Said Court House and to Advertise for Undertakers & to receive proposals that may be Consistent with economy and the Interest of the County.

“RICHARD CONNER Clk Supervisors.”

In 1792 a tax of £315 (\$787.50) was levied upon the county for building the court house, and the sum of £15 (\$37.50) was paid to Dr. Thomas Frost in payment for the “Lott” which the previous entry says he had *given* for the purpose. The record



does not give the name of the "undertaker" to whom the contract was awarded.

This building is still standing opposite the hotel known as the Richmond County hall. When the present court house was built, the old court house property was sold to Walter Betts, who converted it into a dwelling. It is now (1875) owned and occupied by Isaac M. Marsh, Esq. While this building was used for a court house, the brick building on the opposite corner was the prison.

The same year, 1792, another tax of £84 (\$210) was levied for finishing the court house. The completion of it was delayed for nearly two years, for under date of October, 1794, we are informed that the supervisors met in it for the first time.

The lot on which the present court house stands was conveyed to the supervisors by Henry I. Seaman and wife, by deed bearing date April 19, 1837, at a nominal price, for the purpose of erecting a court house thereon; according to the terms of the conveyance, when the property shall cease to be used for that purpose, it shall revert to the said Seaman or his heirs.

On the 22d December, 1847, Farnham Hall and wife, in consideration of fifty dollars, conveyed to the supervisors the lot in the rear of that on which the court house now stands.

In one of the old record books containing minutes of the proceedings of the supervisors, is the following entry:

"1827, May 5th, At a meeting held this day, present Harmanus Guyon, John Totten & Nicholas Crocheron, Supervisors, also Richard Crocheron, Esq., James Guyon, Esq., and Walter Betts, Esq., Commissioners appointed according to a law passed April 10th, 1826, an act to provide for Building a Fire proof Clerk and Surrogate's office in the County of Richmond, whereby it was made the duty of the Supervisors at their annual meeting to cause to be levied and collected a sum not exceeding One Thousand five hundred Dollars, over and above the expense of Collecting the same, for the purpose of building a fire proof Clerk and Surrogate's Office for Said County, to be located in such part of Said County as the Judges of the Said County, or a majority of them shall direct, and in which all the public Records and Papers belonging as well to the Clerk as the Surrogate of the Said County shall be kept, and the said





Judges have fixed Upon the Cite of the Old County-house on the East side of the Goal for the locating the same.

“ *Whereupon resolved* by the Said Supervisors Present that the county-house be sold and removed without delay to make a clear Cite for the purpose of erecting Said Clerk and Surrogate's office, and also that the proceeds of such sail be paid to the County Treasurer, subject to the order of the Supervisors, and also that the said Commissioners be and hereby are empowered to sell Said County house for the best price that can be got for the same at public Vendue, notice to be given of the sime (sic) of such sale. And the Supervisors having caused to be raised and paid into the Treasury of Said County the sum of six hundred dollars for and towards the Building Said Clerk and Surrogate's office. Also resolved by the Supervisors that they will in case the six hundred dollars raised for the purpose of building Said Clerk and Surrogate's office should be Insufficient to pay for building the same; In such case they will Borrow as much as will be sufficient to complete the same. Provided however that the whole cost of building such office shall not exceed one thousand five hundred dollars.

Signed HERMS GUYON,  
NICHOLAS CROCHERON,  
JOHN TOTTEN.

“Whereupon it was ordered by the Supervisors that their Clk shall Immediately give to said Commissioners an order on the County Treasurer for the said sum of six hundred Dollars.

“Which said order was in due form made out and delivered to one of the said Commissioners for the Payment of the said six hundred Dollars as aforesaid.

RICHARD CONNER, Clk                    §    C.  
of the board of Supervisors    600    00.”

The above document is given in full, as a specimen of the verbose and exceedingly precise style in which Col. Richard Conner, as clerk of the supervisors, kept all the county records under his official care.

The “Goal” herein alluded to is that building which stands on the corner, north of the old dilapidated hotel called the “Richmond County Hall,” and the clerk and surrogate's fire-proof offices, built on the “cite” of the former county house is the brick building adjoining it on the east. The cost of



erecting it is not known, but bills for material and labor to the amount of \$941.08 were audited that year. The building was completed during that and the following years, as will be seen by the following record dated October 7, 1828.

“It is Resolved by a Majority of the Supervisors of the County of Richmond that three men be appointed to take charge of the records of the County of Richmond, in consequence of the Ill health of the present County Clerk, Jonathan Lewis, Esq., and that they make an Inventory of such Books and Papers as they shall find in the office of Said Clerk, and shall deposit such Books and Papers in the office now erected



BUILDING FORMERLY USED AS A CLERK'S OFFICE  
AND JAIL.

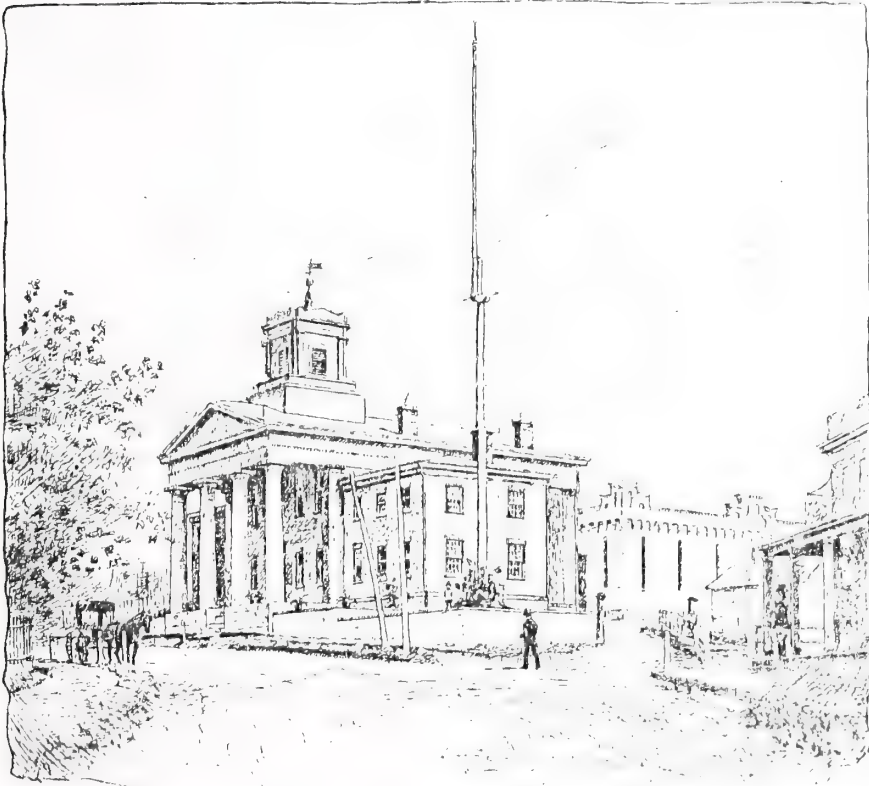
in the Village of Richmond for that purpose. Resolved that Walter Betts, Esq., Richard D. Littell, Esq., and Abraham Auten, Deputy Clerk, is hereby appointed to take an Inventory of said Books and Papers and deliver them to the said Abraham Auten, Deputy Clerk, on his giving a receipt for such Books and Papers on the Schedule or Inventory, and deliver such Schedule so signed to the Supervisors of Said County.”

The old court house and the lot in which it stands was sold at auction to Isaac M. Morris December 17, 1837. That building still stands on the west side of the street, nearly opposite



a point midway between the old Dutch Reformed church and the old jail above referred to. It is a two-story-and-basement building, and is now devoted to private uses.

The present jail, in the yard in the rear of the present court house, was built in 1860. A new county clerk's office, on the opposite side of the street from the court house, is now being completed.



PRESENT COURT HOUSE AND JAIL.

We have but little evidence of the use of the whipping-post and stocks in this county. All that we have at hand is the record of the supervisors under date of October 26, 1801, when a bill was audited for the amount of \$12 to Lawrence Hillyer "for Erecting a Public Stocks according to Law."

In giving a glimpse of the domestic and social customs of the early years of the republican period we condense from an interview made years ago with one whose personal recollection



extended back to that time. Most articles of home consumption were then made at home. Each member of the family had one new pair of shoes every year, made by a shoemaker who came to the house in the fall. It was the custom of that craft to go from house to house in annual rounds of repairing and newly fitting shoes for the feet of the family. There was little money on the island. People were paid in articles of produce. A girl who could spin at the rate of seven hundred strands to the pound was considered a good spinner. The young ones spun tow. It was customary for the negroes to raise tobacco for their own use. All people drank a great deal of cider. It was offered to every neighbor or stranger on arriving. It was a custom to put into the pitcher of cider a piece of hot toasted bread or a doughnut, to warm the beverage. This hospitality was indulged on the occasions of the people assembling at some neighbor's house for a religious service.

The conveyance then in use was the farm wagon, with a pair of clean sides to be put on it after it had been all the week used for carting manure or other dirty substances. The old fashioned rush-bottom chairs were placed in it for seats. To this the horses were hitched and their movements were guided by means of a single rope rein on the outside of each horse and a connecting rope running across from one bit to the other. These were called "couple-towse." Men of somewhat wealthy or aristocratic pretensions wore knee-buckles. A silver-mounted riding whip was considered a great acquisition to the make-up of an aspiring man. Two-wheeled gigs were sometimes used. They had no tops, but had wooden springs, called "grasshopper springs."

It is said that John C. Dongan brought to his wife, from Europe, the first silk dress ever seen on Staten Island. He pronounced it only a "middling good one," having cost but fifty pounds, when for one hundred pounds he could have obtained a really good one. A schoolmaster, by the name of Pritchett was remembered as coming to the employer to get his pay for teaching. He took it in fresh meat and other articles. After spending the evening, chatting and drinking cider, he went home, having prepared for his lonely walk through the woods by having a stout hickory stick burned to a live coal at one end. By brandishing this stick in the air he kept the





wolves, with which the woods abounded, and which would be attracted by the smell of the meat, from attacking him. It was customary for the most respectable persons to go to taverns. One of the highest repute was the "Bull's Head," then kept by a man named Johnson, and later by one Garrison. The "Black Horse" was of rather inferior tone, being frequented by those who ran horses on the road there.

Flax was raised in considerable quantities, not only for the linen fibre it yielded, but for the seed, large quantities of which were shipped to Ireland, where it brought a good price. John V. D. Jacobsen, who lived at New Dorp, and was accounted one of the three richest men on the island in his time (Judge Seguine and Jacob Mersereau being the others), died in 1826, his property being valued then at seventeen thousand five hundred dollars. In those times the price of a drink at a tavern was three cents, but in the time of the war of 1812 this was increased to four cents when sugar was taken. Cigars cost twenty-five cents a hundred, and were frequently kept by landlords to be given away whenever asked for.

The war of 1812 passed without leaving any considerable traces upon this island that are now discernable. Fortifications were thrown up for defense in case the British fleet should come into the bay. One of these was located on the summit of the hill at Prince's bay, a little north of the light-house. The embankment was on the seaward margin of the height, and part of it has evidently been washed away by rains and the tide undermining the bank. It is said that the fort contained a block house, the stones of which were afterward used in the construction of the light-house and keeper's house adjoining. Another earthwork was at Little Fort hill, near the site of the present fort that commands the narrows.

The general laws of the state from time to time enacted for the gradual extinction of slavery were the same in their application to this county as elsewhere. The records of the different towns show some interesting relics of the custom. We have only space for a few. Here is a transcription from the Westfield town records :

"I Winant Winants of the County of Richmond and State of New York and Town of Westfield, Yeoman Doth Certify that I have Had a Female Negroe Child Born of a Slave the



26th July 1799 Named Bett from its Birth to this Date is Six months and Twenty Four Days old.

“WINANT WINANTS.

“Recorded this 19th February, 1800.

“HENRY PARLEE, Town Clerk.”

This is also from the records of Westfield :

“This is to Certify that on the third Day of February 1800 the Negro wench a Slave Belonging to Benjamin Larzelere, Yeoman of the Town of Westfield in the County of Richmond and State of New York was Dilivered of a male Child wich is now Living by the Name of Tom.

“Given under my hand the 7th Day of April 1800.

“BENJAMIN LARZELERE.

“Recorded this seventh Day of April one thousa Eight Hundred 1880

“HENRY PARLEE, Town Clerk.”

The following are from the records of the town of Castleton:

“I do hearby certify that a male negro child named Nicholas the Father of whom named Sam belongs to me, and the mother named Bett belongs to Cornelius Cruser, was born In my House at Castle Town the eight day of may in the year of our Lord one thousand Eight hundred, and I request that this return of the Birth of the Said Child may be Entered agreeable to the directions Contained In a late Act for the gradual Abolition of Slavery.

“JOHN MERCEREAU.”

“Castletown January 15th, 1801.”

“Richmond County 30th wit :

“Personally came & appeared before me John Garretson, first Judge of the said County, the Rev. Peter I. Vanpelt, who being duly sworn deposeth and saith, that he has a coloured boy named Harry born February 1803—also that he has a coloured Girl named Eliza born August 1810—also a coloured girl named Dian born June 29th 1814—also a coloured boy named Ned—born Febry 28th 1818 And further this deponent saith not.

“PETER I. VANPELT

“Sworn before me  
this 6th day of april 1818

“JOHN GARRETSON



"To be recorded by the Town Clerk of Castletown as the Law directs."

"This is to Certify that my Woman of Colour named Mary had a female child born the fifteenth day of December in the Year 1814 named Mary and also same Woman had a male child born the Second day of March 1817 named Harry — and also my woman of Colour named Jane had a male child born the tenth day of July one thousand eight hundred and sixteen named Murry which Certificate I hereby request the Clerk of Castletown to record. Dated at Castletown the 9th day of May, 1817.

"JAMES GUYON"

"To the Clerk of Castle Town. I hereby certify to you that a female negro Child named Mary, born of my slave Jane the fifth day of February last, which was given up to be recorded, I do hereby Manumit and give up all my right & title to the service thereof given under my hand at Castle Town the third day of February, 1804

"JACOB LOZIER"

"Richmond County }  
Town of Northfield } To whom it may Concern know ye that on the 24 day of April in the year of our Lord one thousand Eight hundred & Eleven I Joseph Ryers a free Black Man do by thease presence Manumit and abandon all My Rite and title to the service of my son Harry and he is hereby pronounced By me to be a free man agreeable to the Laws of the State of New York as witness My hand

his

"JOSEPH X RYERS"

mark

During the years of the first half of this century, as well as those of the eighteenth century that followed the revolution, the people paid attention to the training of their able bodied citizens in the manipulation of weapons of defense and military movements. Years afterward, when the settled condition of peace seemed to lull the public mind into indifference in regard to preparations for war, the custom fell into disuse. The militia system was under similar regulations in this as in other counties of the state. It was held as the bulwark of that confidence which the people had in their own dominant might; the dearest feature and safeguard of freedom; the life guard of a



nation, drawn out yearly before the view of its rulers, showing them their own proper orbits by a display of numerical strength which it would be madness to oppose, and at the same time showing to the eyes of foreign powers the muscle of the nation, against which it would be folly to make conquest.

Reviews of the militia were held on the broad plain which was spread out on either side of New Dorp lane. Here the review by the officers annually took place, and those occasions were gala days to the people who witnessed them, as well as to those who took part in the parade. Officers and men were on the alert to make the best possible exhibition, for critical eyes were upon them, as well, as was often the case, the eyes of loved ones, the fair and the beautiful. A sumptuous dinner and general merry-making, often accompanied by the perverted good cheer that flowed from the old decanters and made discord where harmony was intended, usually followed the military review.

The militia of Staten Island in 1837 composed the One Hundred and Forty-sixth regiment, which was a part of the Sixty-fifth brigade, in the Second division of New York state infantry. The division was then in command of Major-General Van Buren, the brigade was under Brigadier-General D. Denyse, and the regiment was commanded by Colonel Tompkins. The "*Mirror*," a local paper of the time, in its issue of September 7, 1837, contains the following picture of one of these militia parades.

"On Friday last we were witness to a parade of the officers of the 146th regiment. Major Tompkins of the staff of Major General Van Buren, has lately been promoted to the command of this regiment, and this was his first parade, or drill of officers. We unexpectedly met the battalion on its way to Richmond village; the sounds of martial music reverberated along the hills, and prickled up the hairs on our horse's ears, his whole frame quivered with alarm; steed threatened steed with high and boastful neighings; cows scampered off like militiamen at the clarion's sound; our own impatient nag turned tail upon the army, bearing safely away his interesting burthen; the very mud-turtles, that inhabit the ponds in the neighborhood, plunged headlong into the tide and hid their coward heads; but all this consternation and dismay was occasioned by the rascally exotics who were hired for the occasion to make a racket with





their drums and trumpets. The detachment themselves were as peaceable a set of men as ever shouldered arms; and we were much better pleased with their manual exercise than we have been with like exhibitions in New York. The officers of the Tompkins Guards looked well in their new uniforms, and the non-commissioned officers behaved like soldiers. One thing we have to commend Col. Tompkins for—his orders were given correctly and in good time; but on the march his guides of the left were poorly covered—this is a matter of some importance, and should be attended to. We understand that the field and staff are about adopting the United States infantry uniform—good. Old Richmond begins to pick up spirit on every hand—she'll do presently. Go it fellow sopers."

A statute fixed the first Monday in September of each year as the day for annual military parade, for all the enrolled militia of the state to parade by companies in each company district. This occasion was frequently denominated the "September training day." Those "September training days" were remarkable occasions, landmarks in the lives of the sturdy yeomanry. To get the crowd into shape was a task indeed for the officers, and the line would often be a marvel of curvature—straight as a new moon. This might be accounted for in a measure by the fact that it was the only time in each year when the privates were drilled by companies, and was also the day when the corporal would bring in his new recruits, and report their enrollment. Those new recruits, the boys, were not required to be equipped at their first appearance, but simply to answer at roll call, and when any of them remained in the ranks during the drill, it was only to have a good time generally. If those young soldiers appeared with anything less crude than a hoe handle or a flail staff instead of a musket, the officers were to be congratulated.

The regimental parade, or "general muster," as it was called, was neither boys' play nor a drill with wooden guns in a half circle. Upon the adjutant, who was chief of the colonel's staff, devolved the duty of forming the companies into one regimental line and to equalize the divisions, then the whole was turned over to the colonel commanding, and after drill and evolutions in his discretion the regiment was reviewed by the division and brigadier generals, each with his staff officers all mounted.



After passing in review, the field officers and the colonel's mounted staff were all inspected in the saddle by the brigade inspector. Then followed the inspection of the officers and privates in the line, the inspector having dismounted. Every sword, musket, lock and flint, cartridge-box and bayonet, as well as the uniform of the officers, must pass the ordeal, and the belt or buckle that betrayed any sign of weakness was at the risk of being sundered by a little extra force of the inspector's arm. The confusion and loose discipline of the "September training day" had no place in the "general muster."

The colonel commanding was required by law to issue an order annually, summoning the regimental and staff officers, the commissioned and non-commissioned officers and musicians of the whole island to rendezvous at some place designated by him in the order, three successive days, for drill and instruction, which was conducted by the regimental officers under the supervision of the colonel. To be buttoned to the chin in the regulation coat, and exposed to the rays of the hot summer sun, under a brimless beaver chapeau, was an ordeal that was dreaded by those who had to pass through it, but the blasts of the sun on the parade field were not to be compared in their destructive effects with the blasts of gunpowder on the field of battle. About forty years ago the state laws were materially changed, and all those old military organizations were disbanded.

An era of improvement seemed to open upon the island about the year 1836. In the following year it was said that more buildings were then in process of erection or had just been completed than at any previous time since the revolution. In Richmond village a new street had just been opened and seven new houses had been built upon it. The village had grown dormant, but this dash seemed like the pushing forth of a new life. Tompkinsville was estimated to have doubled its population within a short space of time, a rapid growth developing toward Stapleton. New Brighton was unusually full of life and bustle. Factoryville had suffered somewhat from the decreased activity in its manufactures, yet the recent erection of many new homes gave it a cheering glow of promise. Improvements were also noticeable at Rossville, the name of which had not long before been changed from the old cognomen, "Blazing Star."



That there are two sides to every question of public policy, and that there was a strong sentiment against some enterprises that are generally welcomed, is seen by the action of the people of this county taken in regard to the establishment of a bank, a whaling company and a steam ferry company in 1838. These three enterprises were projected here in 1838, and notice was duly given that applications would be made to the legislature for acts to incorporate them. A public meeting was called at Factoryville, at the "Shakespeare Hotel," January 11, 1838, in which call the "citizens of Richmond County, without distinction of party, opposed to all monopolies," were invited to join in opposing the granting of charters to the aforesaid companies. The meeting, which was said to be "large and respectable," was presided over by Hon. Samuel Barton, while Paul Mersereau acted as secretary. Animated discussions followed, and a number of resolutions were passed, the result of which was to decide upon a remonstrance to the legislature against granting charters to any of the proposed incorporations. The sentiments prevailing in these expressions declared that "we view the application for a bank at the present as a most flagrant and daring insult to the good of the People \* \* \* and that we will use all honorable means to bring into contempt our present odious banking system;" that they regarded the incorporation of a steamboat company as entirely unnecessary; and in general that all acts of special incorporation come from the people and that the people have a just right to inquire into the necessity of such acts, "and if found wanting in the balance of justice, to instruct our representative to veto the applications in the bud, and thereby save ourselves a vast amount of money which is expended in payment of legislatures for discussing topics which they of right have no business to meddle with." In the remonstrance the following passage appears, which we think worthy of notice here:

"Your petitioners think it preposterous in any government to lend its aid to carry into effect the mad schemes of speculators, to permit them by the aid of their corporate privileges to appropriate all the profits arising therefrom to their private use, as long as successful, by which they often acquire princely fortunes, and then by their private property being exempt from the payment of their corporate debts,



enable them, when unsuccessful, to throw the burthen of their losses on the community. It is no longer a novelty to see the individual stockholders of a bankrupt institution living in splendor and rolling in wealth, while from the poor mechanic and laborer they withhold the amounts justly due to them, and thereby deprive them of the means of supporting their destitute and unhappy families. It is also a bitter reflection that such cruelty and injustice is sanctioned by the laws of our beloved country, from which there is no earthly appeal."

As we follow the chronological order of our history circumstances invite our attention for a moment to the remarkable peculiarities of the season of 1843. The early part of the preceding winter had been quite mild, but it became very severe about February, and so continued until near May, when the weather became suddenly warm. Extremes of heat and cold followed in frequent alternations. But little spring weather was developed. On the 3d of June ice formed in the Clove road an eighth of an inch thick. All vegetation was stunted. Early in that month extreme heat commenced, accompanied with drought which extended into July. The seventeen-year locusts appeared early in June, doing a great amount of mischief to young trees. They remained about six weeks. On the 2d of July the thermometer marked 94° in the shade, and in the afternoon of that day a terrific tornado passed over the island, adding to the damage of frost, drought and locusts. Early in August a deluge of rain followed the drought. Early in September a remarkably cold week necessitated fires to keep warm by, and this was followed by a spell of extreme heat.

The island has several times felt the shock of earthquakes. On the 21st of February, 1845, between 7 and 8 o'clock in the evening, a shock was felt. Persons seated at the time could feel the chairs oscillating beneath them. The same impression was perceptible in different parts of the island. On the 25th of the following October, another shock was sensibly felt on the island, this one moving from east to west. February 4, 1846, still another similar shock was felt. The preceding summer was one of great heat and extreme dryness. On the 8th of September, 1848, about 11 o'clock at night, an earthquake was felt on the island. One who remembers it, thus describes his impressions. "I was in bed at the time, and in an imperfect sleep





and was awakened by it. It shook the house and was accompanied by a noise as of many carriages passing over the paved streets of a city. Its course seemed from southwest to northeast, and it continued several seconds. But perhaps the most severe earthquake shock ever felt here was that which visited the island, in common with some other parts of the country, on the afternoon of Sunday, August 10, 1884. It passed at 10 minutes past 2 o'clock, and was preceded by a deep rumbling sound, which increased in volume till every house on the island trembled, shaking sashes, doors and shutters, throwing dishes from tables and shelves and jostling bricks off the tops of chimnies. Some supposed that the Standard oil works on Bergen point had exploded. At the Pavilion hotel the guests were at dinner. Great confusion prevailed, men and women rushing into the halls and about the house, while some ladies fainted. More or less confusion prevailed in other houses, but no serious damage was done.

We come now to notice one of the most conspicuous barriers to the prosperity and growth of Staten Island that its history can show. That "barrier" was indeed long since "burned away." We refer to the quarantine hospitals, which were located at Tompkinsville, and the removal of which is one of the most striking examples of the determination to which a community may in very desperation be driven by a persistent course of oppression, even when pursued under the cloak of state authority.

As the commerce of the port of New York extended itself, and vessels from all parts of the world visited its harbor, and sometimes brought infectious diseases with them, it became an imperative necessity that the authorities should establish a quarantine for the protection of the people dwelling within its limits. Accordingly, the colonial legislature, in 1758, enacted a law creating a quarantine establishment, and located it upon Bedloe's island, where it remained thirty-eight years, and from which it was removed to Nutten, or Governor's island. In 1799, the yellow fever was brought to New York, and it was decided that the establishment was altogether too near the metropolis to be of any service in protecting the people, by preventing the spread of malignant diseases. Commissioners were then appointed by act of legislature to procure a site on Staten Island. They selected a parcel of land containing thirty acres, belong-



ing to St. Andrew's church, beautifully located on the northeast shore of the island. Strong opposition was made not only by the owners of the land, but by the people of the island generally, to its location among them, but it was taken, notwithstanding, by what in law is termed "the right of eminent domain." Hospitals and other necessary buildings were erected, and during the first year of its existence on the island, twenty-five cases of yellow fever occurred among the people residing outside of its boundaries, all but one of which proved fatal. Almost every year thereafter contagious diseases, in some form, found victims among the people. In 1848, the number of persons sick from infectious diseases outside of the quarantine amounted to one hundred and eighty. In that year an earnest petition for relief was presented to the legislature by the people of the island, supported by powerful influences from New York and Brooklyn, and a committee was appointed by the legislature to examine into the matter, and report at the following session. This committee at once proceeded to the performance of the duty assigned them, and in 1849 "unhesitatingly recommended the immediate removal of the quarantine." While the committee were engaged in performing their duty, the yellow fever again broke out, and extended itself to various other places. In April an act was passed for the removal of the quarantine establishment from Staten Island to Sandy Hook. The measure had its opponents among the shipping merchants and others in New York, who were not idle; the state of New Jersey also interposed its objections, and the persons appointed by the legislature of New York to carry out its intentions, took no action whatever, so that the removal act remained a dead letter on the statute books.

The fearful visitation of yellow fever in 1856 once more aroused the people of the island, and another application for relief was made. In March, 1857, another act was passed for the removal of the quarantine from Staten Island, but the opposition of the commissioners of emigration, the board of underwriters of New York, and the shipping interests of that city, again thwarted the beneficent designs of the legislature. The precautions adopted by the local authorities to protect the citizens and their families from infection, were opposed by the health officer, and every possible obstacle was thrown in the



way of the local officers to embarrass them in the performance of their duties.

The largest hospital building in the enclosure was three stories high, one hundred and thirty-six by twenty-eight feet, and had wings thirty-seven by twenty-eight feet at each end. A hospital building near the water was three stories high, fifty by forty-five feet, with wings at each end sixty-six by twenty-six feet. These two buildings were designed to accommodate four hundred patients. The small-pox hospital was two stories high, eighty by twenty-eight feet, with a piazza running along the front and rear. It was designed to accommodate fifty patients. There were twelve other buildings on the grounds, viz. : health-officer's residence, deputy health-officer's residence, assistant physician's house, steward and farmer's house, work-house, house for barge-men, boat house, office, carpenter's shop, ice and coal house, wagon house and barn.

The board of health of the town of Castleton was organized August 2, 1856, with Richard Christopher as chairman and Dr. Isaac Lea as health officer. Frequent meetings were held, and the health of the villages of the town, and the effect of the quarantine upon them frequently considered. Carelessness was prevalent in the management of that institution, and diseases were frequently propagated from the hospitals among the people living in the town. These diseases were communicated by employees of the quarantine going out among the people, and by miasmatic transmission through the atmosphere. The history of the action of this board and the progress of the popular sentiment which kept pace with it would be interesting to those who have time to read, but space forbids following it in any detail during the three years of its growth up to the culminating point. Dr. E. C. Mundy was appointed health officer during this time, and at times a guard was employed to keep surveillance over the enclosure, to prevent as far as possible the commerce of its employees with the people outside.

At a meeting July 15, 1858, health officer Doctor Mundy stated that a persistent determination was manifest to thwart the action of the board by misrepresentation and ridicule. In order to counteract in some measure the influence of such efforts he made a statement as follows :

“ We have located in our midst a lazaretto, whence emanates those noxious effluvia which produce disease and death. This



monstrous nuisance, it seems, from the result of the efforts made for the accomplishment of its removal by the people of the county for several years past, we are doomed still to bear with and submit to, and hence it becomes necessary to adopt such measures as the law authorizes to mitigate as far as possible the evils of its presence and protect our citizens from the influence of its deadly miasmata. For this purpose and no other, the Board of Health was organized, and at its last meeting adopted rules and regulations by which all persons engaged off shore or on board of any infected or quarantined vessels, and all passengers and luggage landed from such vessel shall be prohibited from coming outside of the quarantine enclosure and from going to the City of New York upon any of the boats of the Staten Island Ferry Company."

Though the approval of the quarantine health officer, Doctor Thompson, seems to have been secured, harmony did not exist with the commissioners of health of New York city. Notwithstanding all efforts of the health officers he reports July 23—" Stevedores and lightermen, passengers and luggage from infected vessels, continue as previously to pass from the quarantine enclosure to other parts of the town and on board our public ferry boats." The spirit of discord between the quarantine authorities and the local board of health increased until Doctor Mundy declared his conclusion "that the health authorities of the port of New York look upon the health and lives of the people of Richmond county as matters of secondary importance, and hardly worthy their consideration." Several cases of yellow fever occurred, all of which were directly traceable to violations of the board of health rules. It was also evident that great laxity existed in the administration of quarantine rules, men being allowed to pass to and from infected vessels wherever they pleased.

At a meeting of the board August 19th it was reported that seventeen cases of yellow fever had occurred outside of the quarantine walls. A district at Tompkinsville was then infected with yellow fever. Power was given to Doctor Mundy, as health officer of the board, to make and attend to the enforcement of such rules and regulations as he thought proper, and the penalty affixed for the violation of such rules in the name of the board was limited at one thousand dollars fine or two years imprisonment. August 27th the board met again. The infection





of yellow fever which was spreading into the town, was clearly caused by the presence of a fleet of infected vessels lying at quarantine. Doctor Mundy in his report at that meeting said : " But over this source of evil I am aware that your honorable Board has no control, and therefore I have no suggestions to make in relation to it." Subsequent events, however, showed that suggestions were alive from another source, of which we have no written record to tell us of their growth. The same report gives another cause of the transmission of disease by infected articles being conveyed to the home of one of the employees whose duty it was to burn them. He did not do so, but carried the clothing to his residence and there washed it. The whole district lying in the triangle surrounded by the bay, the hospital buildings and Griffin street was infected. The doctor recommended prompt, decisive action to prevent a recurrence of the offense.

At a meeting of the board on the 1st of September the following resolutions were unanimously passed, and ordered to be published :

" *Resolved*, that the whole Quarantine Establishment, located as it is, in the midst of a dense population, has become a pest and a nuisance of the most odious character, bringing death and desolation to the very doors of the people of the Towns of Castleton and Southfield.

" *Resolved*, that it is a nuisance too intolerable to be borne by the citizens of these towns any longer.

" *Resolved*, that this Board recommend the citizens of this Town and County to protect themselves by abating this abominable nuisance without delay."

On the night of that and the following day, September 1 and 2, 1858, about thirty men entered the quarantine enclosure, and after removing the patients from the several hospitals, set fire to and burned down every building connected with the establishment. That some excesses should be committed by an exasperated populace, was to be expected. There was so much system, however, in their mode of operation, that it was evident everything had been previously arranged, and that the people were carrying out instructions previously received. During the continuance of this intense excitement, it was remarkable that not a single life was sacrificed, nor was any one seriously injured.



These summary proceedings of the people of Staten Island produced great excitement, not only in the city of New York, but throughout the state, and indeed throughout the country. The people engaged in them were termed in the public prints barbarians, savages, incarnate fiends, sepoys, and in fact no epithets were considered too vile to be applied to them. But they were all borne with equanimity, sustained by the consciousness that sooner or later there would be a revolution in public opinion. After all the mischief had been done, the governor of the state declared the island to be in a state of revolt, and sent over several regiments of militia, who were for some time encamped upon the grounds immediately north of the quarantine.

A matter of a character so serious, could not, of course, be passed over in silence. Legal proceedings were at once instituted, and Messrs. John C. Thompson and Ray Tompkins, who were regarded as the instigators and ringleaders of the incendiaries, were arrested on a charge of arson, and arraigned before the county judge, Hon. H. B. Metcalfe, for examination. His opinion, which was extensively copied and read, had great influence in changing public opinion. His closing remarks merit repetition and preservation.

"Undoubtedly the city of New York is entitled to all the protection in the matter that the State can give, consistently with the health of others; she has no right to more. Her great advantages are attended by correspondent inconveniences; her great public works, by great expenditures; her great foreign commerce, by the infection it brings. But the legislature can no more apportion upon the surrounding communities her dangers, than her expenses; no more compel them to do her dying, than to pay her taxes; neither can be done."

Thus ended the charges brought against the prisoners; no person was punished for any complicity in the matter, but the county, very unjustly in the opinion of many, was compelled to pay for the value of the property destroyed, both public and private; nevertheless, the people consoled themselves with the reflection, that even at that price, they had cheaply, as well as effectually, rid themselves of a grievous nuisance, which had not only depreciated the value of their property, and exposed themselves and their families to contagion in its worst forms,



but had actually been the direct cause of the death of hundreds of their relatives and neighbors.

The board of health employed a force of special police, twenty-five by day and an equal number by night, to keep a constant guard around the quarantine enclosure, to allow no communication between it and the town. The infected district at Tompkinsville was more effectually quarantined, and the health officer was instructed to prevent all intercourse with the district, even by fencing it in if he should deem it necessary. Meetings of the board were held daily, and all physicians were required to report daily all cases of infectious diseases. On the 14th of September the board passed unanimous resolutions that immediate steps be taken to prevent the re-establishment of the quarantine buildings, and appointed a committee to legally restrain the board of health of the city of New York and the health commissioners and commissioners of emigration "from re-erecting the said hospitals, buildings and shanties—or in doing any act by which the said nuisance may be re-established, continued or maintained in the Town of Castleton."

The quarantine establishment was never rebuilt here. A floating hospital was arranged and anchored in the Lower bay in 1860, and later hospitals were erected on two small islands in the Lower bay nearly opposite New Dorp, but far enough from the island shore to give freedom from any apprehensions of infectious communications.

Under an act of April 16, 1860, a commission was authorized to investigate the damage sustained by the state in the destruction of the old quarantine hospitals. The commission met in June, and after an extended inquiry, made their award, fixing the whole amount at \$121,598.39. The supervisors of Richmond county in December accepted the award, and soon after issued bonds of the county to meet the same. These were given to the commissioners of emigration, who sold them as occasion required and appropriated the proceeds to the expenses of their work. By an act of the legislature, passed in 1870, the bonds then remaining, to the amount of \$10,725, were ordered to be surrendered and cancelled by the comptroller.

At the beginning of the year 1861 clouds of discord and political strife began to darken the sky and obscure the prospects of the island in common with other parts of the land. Fanaticism and hot-headed indiscretion had accomplished their work



and the direful results were then hidden behind the veil which was about to remove and disclose the horrors of four years of civil war. As the opening events developed, the people in some measure were able to lay aside party spirit and join with some show of unanimity in the work of sustaining the government in its efforts to contend with a gigantic rebellion. In accordance with the recommendation of the president, Wednesday, January 4th was observed as a day of fasting and prayer, that the threatened war clouds might pass away.

One of the first acts of hostility in which Staten Island was directly concerned was the seizure early in that month, of the schooner "S. W. Lutrell" of Staten Island, at Norfolk, Va., for violation of the inspection laws of that state for preventing the escape of fugitives and slaves.

A large and enthusiastic Union meeting said at the time to be the largest mass meeting that had ever convened on the island, was held at Tottenville on Saturday the 26th of January. A banner was raised, bearing upon it the motto, "The Constitution and the Union," and the most enthusiastic expressions of loyalty and devotion to the country of our fathers were indulged in. Guns were fired for the states of the Union, for General Scott and for Major Anderson, and resolutions were adopted, among which was the following :

"*Resolved*, That the peace and happiness of this country depend not on mere amendments to the Constitution, nor concession to the slave power, but upon a strict adherence to the Constitution, and a wise, firm and determined execution of the federal law."

In April preparations were made to meet the expected call for troops to defend the nation. The island began thus early to assume a martial appearance. Uniformed men might be seen hurrying to and fro, and recruits from almost every household were answering to the call, and making ready to go into camp. On the 20th of the month a number of young men who had joined the Seventy-first N. Y., embarked with the regiment on board the steamer "R. R. Cuyler." Others enlisted in the Seventy-third and other regiments. The flames of patriotism burned high, and party feeling was forgotten in the desire to maintain the integrity of the nation. An editorial in a local paper said—"We know that the soldiers of Staten Island go with no vindictive feelings towards the South to gratify. They





go with the sword in one hand, and the olive branch in the other ; and the secession traitors South, as well as the abolition traitors North, are the objects of their special abhorrence."

The community now began to be greatly agitated in regard to the war in prospect. Handbills were posted throughout the county calling for recruits in the Scott Life Guard in New York ; sign boards, bearing the words " Death to all Traitors," were nailed up on trees along the shore roads ; in one instance an effigy, with protruding tongue, was hung by the neck from a stake in the center of a mill pond, while on his breast the figure bore a placard, on which were the words " The Traitor's Doom ;" a secret combination was said to have been formed on the island, whose members assumed the duty of learning who were possessed of traitorous sympathies and inclinations, and warning them against manifesting those sympathies too freely ; recruiting officers frequently visited the island from the city and drew away large numbers of the young men ; flags were raised on vessels in the river and bay, on house tops and public buildings, on horses and vehicles in the street, and were even worn upon the persons of ladies and gentlemen, some, however, substituting rosettes instead of flags. During the month the Seventy third was engaged in recruiting its ranks, and tendered their services to the governor. The regiment was under command of Colonel Ray Tompkins. At the close of the month it was under marching orders. The Middletown guard, an independent organization commanded by Captain Stahl, also prepared to take an active part in the war. The ministers in the different parts of the island made reference on Sunday to the national troubles. The arrival of Major Anderson and his command in New York, after the evacuation of Fort Sumter, set free a blaze which swept over the whole northern states ; and Staten Island, so closely connected with New York, could not but feel a double portion of the patriotic enthusiasm that glowed already with such a fervid heat. A mass meeting of the citizens of the county was called at the old quarantine grounds in Tompkinsville, on Saturday the 27th, " to take measures for the prompt action of Richmond County at this crisis." This meeting, though not large, was enthusiastic. It was addressed by Mr. Clark and Henry J. Raymond. The vigorous prosecution of the war was urged, and the following resolutions offered by Mr. G. W. Curtis were adopted :



“ *Whereas*, The people of the United States within the Union, and under their own Government, have for three-quarters of a century enjoyed an unparalleled prosperity and progress, for the continuance of which the Constitution of the United States is the perpetual guarantee; and,

“ *Whereas*, That Constitution provides for a constant reference of every disputed political policy to the peaceful decision of the people at the polls, and of every question arising under the Constitution and laws to the judgment of the Supreme Court of the United States, thereby removing all conceivable occasion for forcible resistance to the laws; and,

“ *Whereas*, An armed rebellion now threatens the very existence of that Government, seizing the forts, arsenals, navy-yards, vessels and hospitals which belong to the people of the United States, and consummating its crime by firing upon the flag of the nation, the glorious symbol of our unity, our liberty, and our general welfare.

“ *Resolved*, That it was the duty of all persons in the country, who felt themselves aggrieved, to resort to the peaceful and legal means of redress provided by the Constitution; and that when, instead of so doing, they took up arms and organized resistance to the Government of the country, they struck at the very heart of organized civil society.

“ *Resolved*, That the Government of the United States has properly sought, by every kind of forbearance, to avoid the sad necessity of asserting its authority by force of arms, but that it is at length manifest to the whole world that it must now subdue or be subdued.

“ *Resolved*, That in forcibly maintaining that authority everywhere within its dominions, and at every cost, the Government wages no war of invasion or conquest, but simply does its duty, expecting every citizen to do the same, and to take care that the doom of the rebels and traitors who would ruin the most beneficent Government in the world, and so destroy the hope of free popular institutions forever, shall be swift, sudden and overwhelming.

“ *Resolved*, That when the supreme authority of the Government of the people of the United States shall have been completely reestablished, we, with all other good citizens, will cheerfully coöperate in any measures that may be taken in accordance with the Constitution, fully to consider and lawfully to redress



all grievances that may anywhere be shown to exist, yielding ourselves, and expecting all others to yield to the will of the whole people, constitutionally expressed.

“*Resolved*, That we, loyal citizens of Richmond County hereby, before God and man, take the oath of fidelity to the sacred flag of our country, and to the cause of popular liberty and Constitutional Government which that represents, pledging ourselves to each other, that by the love we bear our native land, and our unfaltering faith in the principles of our Government, we will transmit to our children, unimpaired, the great heritage of blessings we have received from our fathers.

“*Resolved*, That a committee of three from each town in the County be appointed by the Chair, to solicit subscriptions for the benefit of the families of residents of the County, who may be absent upon actual service, and for the equipment of volunteers; and that this fund shall be distributed by a Committee consisting of the Supervisors of the County.

“*Resolved*, That it be recommended to the citizens to form companies in their various neighborhoods, to elect their own officers, to drill regularly, and to hold themselves ready to answer the call of their country.

“*Resolved*, That knowing the readiness of the women of this country to take their part in the holy struggle, we invite them, by the immediate formation of local societies of relief, to prepare bandages and lint for husbands, sons, brothers and lovers, that all hands may work, as all hearts are beating, for God and our native land.”

Several regiments of soldiers, among whom were Wilson's Zouaves, were encamped in the quarantine enclosure at that time. They were marched out and drawn up in line at this meeting and much of the speaking was addressed to them. To the question put to them, “Are you ready to march through Baltimore?” they gave a hearty response expressive of their determination and earnest readiness to face the conflict which was before them.

An unpleasant feature of the presence of these troops temporarily stationed here soon began to manifest itself. These recruits, fresh from the low haunts of New York city and unused to the restraints of military discipline, were not held by the orders, however strict, forbidding them to leave the enclosure of the quarantine grounds. They frequently scaled the walls



and in parties, sometimes as many as thirty, roamed along the shores and over the country, visiting the houses and annoying the inhabitants. Many petty depredations and thefts were committed by them. A few were arrested and taken back to the encampment.

The island now became a rendezvous for many regiments and parts of regiments while waiting to fill their ranks with recruits or for orders to move forward toward the seat of war.

The ladies also, acting on the suggestions contained in the resolutions already quoted, formed associations in the different villages of the county, and while the sterner sex were drilling and equipping for the hard experiences of the battle-field they were preparing lint and bandages and other conveniences and comforts for the disabled, the sick and the dying.

The supervisors, in response to the people's resolutions, met at Tompkinsville on April 27th and appointed W. S. Pendleton as treasurer to hold the fund that might be raised for the equipment of volunteers and the support of their families during their absence. They also authorized him to dispense the fund, with the concurrence of one or more supervisors.

A number of young men, constituting an organization known as the "Young American Guards," began drilling at the Continental hotel at Port Richmond, under the direction of Abraham C. Wood.

When the first recruits were equipping themselves for the war, great difficulty was experienced in finding a sufficient supply of uniforms and equipments. The market in such things was soon run dry, and men who were anxious to be off for the seat of war were delayed until the necessary equipments could be obtained or manufactured.

After the first installment of Staten Island boys had gone out in the Seventy-first and other regiments, their friends looked anxiously for tidings from them. And as their acquaintances and even strangers on the island were desirous of hearing from them, their letters were often published in the local papers and were read with great interest.

During the following summer the popular feeling must have been agitated to a fever heat. Besides the commotion caused by the exciting news from the war, and the presence of large numbers of soldiers in the midst, and the recruiting, flag-raising, speech-making and other work for the cause of the nation,





there were other causes generating agitations that helped still further to inflame the public mind. In partisan politics the outbreak of the war and other influences had greatly disturbed the lines of the old political parties, and a new organization called the Citizen's Union party, which was favorable to sustaining the Union arms and reforming some local abuses, was growing up amid a vast amount of partisan friction. The unsettled condition of the quarantine management also was a cause of frequent alarm for fear that the occupation of the old grounds might be renewed, or the floating hospitals in the bay might be drifted near enough to bring infectious diseases to the island. The frequent disturbances created by drunken soldiers and the consequent insults and annoyances that the people suffered from them, together with the discord generated by the efforts that were made to suppress liquor selling to the soldiers, and the resistance of a numerous and determined band of liquor dealers who were tempted by the unusual profits to continue in the business, all conspired to add more fuel to the flames of popular passion.

The petty depredations frequently committed by soldiers encamped here, and the fear of still greater insecurity from that source led to the organization of a "Home Guard," and a volunteer police force, to be called out by the supervisors in case of any general disturbance that might be caused by the lawlessness of men from the encampments. Reasonable means were taken by the authorities of the camps to prevent the men going out to obtain liquor or to prey upon the peace of the community.

At the circuit court held in November, 1861, the grand jury delivered to the court the following presentment, which is suggestive.

"The Grand Jury of the County of Richmond, upon the termination of their duties, respectfully present, that they are gratified that no serious violations of law have demanded their investigation during the present session of this court, and regard that as a gratifying evidence of the peaceable and law-abiding character of the citizens of this County. Such cases, however, as have fallen under their notice disclose the fact that many violations of public order may be traced to the indulgence and use of intoxicating liquors, and they would recommend that the Commissioners of Excise should stringently, and with



energy, prosecute all persons who are engaged in the sale of strong and spirituous liquors without license, and collect the penalties prescribed for such violations of the law. In this connection, the Grand Jury would intimate that inasmuch as those penalties are directed by the statute to be appropriated when collected for the benefit of the poor of the County, that no compromise of any suits instituted for their recovery can be legally authorized."

Some idea of the extent to which the people responded to the calls of the nation may be gained from the fact that up to the end of November, 1861, in the town of Castleton, there had been subscribed three thousand two hundred and fifty dollars for the families of volunteers. There had volunteered from this town one hundred and twenty-eight men, leaving sixty-four dependent families to be cared for.

At a meeting held at the court house on the evening of November 13th, a committee was appointed to obtain blankets, mittens, stockings, and other useful articles for the soldiers in the field. Other meetings were held in other villages to further the same object, which was the work of the sanitary commission. All through the years of the war the ladies were not lacking in their readiness to engage in labors of love and mercy in doing what they could for the comfort of those on the field of battle and in hospitals.

After the first recruits who went out in the spring of 1861 had served their three months in the war, the work of recruiting for the war settled down to actual business. Meetings were now held at different places to arouse the enthusiasm and patriotic devotion of the strong-armed men of the county to go forth to fight the battles of their country. At a meeting held in Dempsey's hall, Factoryville, September 2, 1861, for the purpose of organizing a company of young men of the island, James Bodine made a patriotic address, and at its close about fifty young men signed the roll. A station was opened during that month, in a large carpenter's shop that had been previously owned by James G. Burger. Unusual inducements were offered to recruits to join a company which was to be transferred to Colonel Tompkins' regiment (Second New York state militia) already at the seat of war. Forty-two of these recruits, belonging to Company A, left Port Richmond on the 23d to join the regiment at Poolsville, Md. Recruiting was now said to be more lively than



it had been before. The following are the names of those of this company who were from the island: Peter Pero (corporal), Lewis D. Johnson (corporal), John E. Johnson, Joseph B. Johnson, John J. Simonson, James H. Munson, Daniel Mallett, Eugene Daily, Henry D. Spong (corporal), Alexander Fitz Simmons, Edward M. Sharrott, Jeremiah Leary, Charles Steers, Thomas J. Cushing, George F. Burbank, James H. Simonson, Jacob T. Selzer, Cornelius Degraff, William D. Maskell, Charles H. King, William Eccles, Joseph K. Plant, Henry Sharp, Joseph B. Barnes, Joseph L. Thompson, James Post, Isaac Lockman, C. P. B. Slaight, Jr., Henry Mercereau, Cornelius Martineau, Jacob Lockman, James B. Burbank, Simon V. N. Decker, Albert Mason, Matthias B. Stewart, James B. Halliday, Albion Noble, John Reynolds, Abraham Turner, Francis M. Tarsney, William H. Fullagar, Arthur Haughian, George Conner, Thomas Conner, Joseph Simonson, Henry T. Paulson, Henry Decker, Samuel Warrender, John W. Tynan, James Simonson, Thomas Flanelly, Frigero Cassq, John R. Green.

The Seventy-third, under Colonel Tompkins, composed of the citizen soldiers of Staten Island, was by a resolution of its officers at a meeting held at Tompkins' Lyceum, June 9th, 1862, offered to the government for three years or the war. It was expected that it would be attached to Spinola's brigade.

In accordance with the direction of the governor, the supervisors, in July, appointed men to meet with others to form a committee for this senatorial district to superintend the raising of troops for the army. The men appointed from Richmond county were Col. Nathan Barrett, Richard Christopher, William H. Vanderbilt, J. Bechtel, William Corry, Henry L. Norris and Edward Banker.

During July a number of Staten Island men enlisted in the Seventy-ninth (Highlanders), which was already in the field. The raising of recruits, however, proceeded slowly, and the authorities seemed backward about taking earnest hold of the matter of raising troops. It seemed necessary that some means should be taken to arouse the public mind to the importance of action. Accordingly, one of the largest and most enthusiastic war meetings ever gathered in the county was held at Port Richmond on the evening of August 11th. Its object was to encourage enlistments to fill the calls for six hundred thousand men which had recently been made by the president.



The quota of Richmond county under these calls amounted to seven hundred and eighty-four men. The meeting assembled at the steamboat wharf, near Oriental hall, where more than fifteen hundred people were present.

Resolutions were passed, heartily approving of the call for troops, declaring it to be the imperative duty of men enjoying the protection and benefits of the government to do all in their power to sustain it ; declaring for the perfect union of the states and the maintenance of the authority of the government at whatever cost ; calling for immediate, prompt, constant and energetic action until the cause for such action should cease ; branding as enemies all who should refuse to speak or act when occasion required for the preservation of the country, and finally that "we have come here to-night to act, and that we will, without delay, contribute liberally of our means to forward enlistments and carry out the great measures now being instituted for the earnest and vigorous prosecution of the war, well assured that the greater the sacrifices we now make the more speedily we shall see our country rejoicing in the blessings of peace, and the whole constellation of stars in our political heaven restored to their accustomed brilliancy and beauty, never again to be dimmed nor obscured."

Hon. Erastus Brooks then made an eloquent and stirring address, during the delivery of which he was frequently interrupted by applause. A bounty of fifty dollars each was offered to volunteers, and the chairman was appointed to receive subscriptions to a fund for that purpose. The list was headed by a subscription of five hundred dollars, and several others of one hundred dollars each, and enlistments and subscriptions flowed in. Other meetings were held in other parts of the county and efforts made to meet the demands of the hour, but the results were not sufficiently rapid to prevent apprehensions that a draft might be resorted to.

The possibilities of a draft in the future developed a peculiar feature in the eagerness with which some endeavored to evade those possibilities. Like the invited guests of a certain great supper of old, they began to make excuses. Men who had never thought of complaining of any ailment now assumed, with the best possible grace, the role of invalids, or found, often by hard stretches of truth, perhaps, that some good reason existed to relieve them of military duty. One has the bronchitis,





another an affection of the jaw, another finds his eyesight very poor and bought spectacles after the order for a draft was made, another has one leg shorter than the other, another is "thick of hearing," another has a sick wife, another gets out of breath very soon, and many others are over forty-five years old or hold some office that exempts them.

Mass meetings were held in the different towns in August, for the purpose of encouraging enlistments and raising subscriptions from which to pay a bounty of \$50 to volunteers and to furnish aid to take care of their dependent families during their absence. Such a meeting for Northfield was held at Elm Park on the 16th, at which some two thousand persons were present, and resolutions were passed expressing the same sentiments as those of the previous meeting and calling on the supervisors to raise by taxation on the towns of the county ten thousand dollars to be appropriated to the relief of the families of volunteers. Voluntary subscriptions for the same purpose were also received. In New Brighton a similar meeting was held on the 18th, at which over three thousand dollars was subscribed for a relief and bounty fund for the town, and a committee appointed to attend to dispensing it and collecting more. Another meeting of the people of Castleton was held on the 21st, at Factoryville. Speeches, resolutions, subscriptions and enthusiasm flowed freely on these occasions. This relief fund, which had been established in 1861, had already received and dispensed above five thousand dollars, and at this time had more than one hundred families dependent on it. The citizens of Middletown held a meeting on the 20th, at which resolutions were passed expressive of a full determination to sustain the government in carrying on the war and calling on the supervisors of the county to appropriate twenty thousand dollars to be distributed to the families of volunteers who had or should enlist from this county. One of these resolutions is in the following language:—

"*Resolved*, That much as we may differ as to questions of policy in minor matters, we are one in the conviction that it is our individual duty to stand by the government of our fathers, and to swear eternal hostility to treason and its abettors whether at home or abroad." The meeting adjourned in a full blaze of enthusiasm, and several enlisted at once.

A meeting at Southfield was held on the 21st, at which some two thousand persons were present. Patriotic resolutions, ex-



pressive of full sympathy with the war, were passed, among which were the following :

“That the people of the town of Southfield are heart and soul devoted to the national cause at the present vital crisis, and that they will make any sacrifice to preserve our national existence, which is now menaced by a band of lawless traitors.”

“That while differences of opinion exist among us on political questions, we are satisfied that this is no time to agitate them—when the life of the nation hangs trembling in the balance, and foreign despots look on exultingly, expecting and hoping to see the failure of democratic institutions thoroughly demonstrated by this war.”

“That we now call upon the supervisor of this town to co-operate with the other supervisors of this County in appropriating a sum of \$20,000 as a bounty for volunteers, and for the support of their wives and children, trusting to the legislature to legalize the act.”

Westfield was not behind her sister towns in answering the country's call. Two meetings were held, and the enthusiasm generated was sufficient to excite the resolution to raise a company of seventy-five men, which should be officered from the town.

The supervisors of Richmond county met on the 27th of August and resolved to issue the bonds of the county to the amount of twenty thousand dollars, the proceeds of which should be used for the payment of extra bounties and relief for the families of volunteers. Though this action was at the time contrary to law, yet it was deemed expedient in view of the extreme circumstances, and the loud call for it which the popular meetings in the different towns had made on the board. It was presumed that the legislature would sanction it, which was done when that body met in the following winter.

Enlistments were now very brisk, the war spirit having, by the enthusiastic speeches and action of the people, become thoroughly aroused. A new company mostly from the town of Castleton was formed, with Louis Schaffner, captain; Orville D. Jewett, first lieutenant, and Clarence Barrett, second lieutenant. Recruiting offices were opened at Dempsey's hotel, Factoryville, and at the white lead works of John Jewett & Sons at Port Richmond. An extra bounty of fifty dollars each was paid volunteers. John C. Green of Castleton, gave one



thousand dollars toward paying these bounties. Barracks were erected for the use of this company on the corner of Broadway and Church street, in Port Richmond. It was decided to attach the company to the regiment of Colonel Minthorne Tompkins.

A meeting of the citizens of the county was held at Clifton park, August 30th, amid the flaunting of banners, the strains of stirring music, and the cheers of the multitude. Enthusiastic speeches were made by Judge H. B. Metcalfe, who presided, George William Curtis, General Busted, Honorable Erastus Brooks, and others. The following resolutions were passed :

“ *Whereas*, The County of Richmond has not been hitherto, and will not be hereafter behind any county in the State in loyalty ; that her sons are fighting in regiments in almost every division of the national army, and that among the men who still remain at home there are scores who will be proud to face the foe for the sake of the Union. Therefore,

“ *Resolved*, That we will relieve the Government from the necessity of making a draft in this County by providing volunteers to fill our quotas under both calls.

“ *Resolved*, That it is the duty of every man to support the Government by every means in his power, by his voice, his example, his money and his good right arm.

“ *Resolved*, That the schemes of the unscrupulous traitors who have dared to raise their fratricidal hands against their brethren are deserving the most extreme punishment, and that the Government is justified in adopting any and all measures known to civilized warfare to suppress this infernal and wicked rebellion at any and every cost.

“ *Resolved*, That the action of the Supervisors of the County in appropriating the sum of \$20,000 for the relief of the families of volunteers meets with our hearty approval, and we hereby endorse the same, and call upon the next Legislature to legalize the said acts of the Supervisors.

“ *Resolved*, That the local Committees thoroughly canvass each Town and procure all the subscriptions they can in aid of the enlistment, and the support of the families of volunteers.”

The governor at this time had appointed two citizens in each town, who, with the aid of the supervisor and assessors, were charged with the duty of enrolling all persons liable to military duty, which they proceeded to do.

The war committee of the First senatorial district was held



at Jamaica, on Thursday, the 4th of September, for the purpose of aiding in the organization of a regiment of volunteers and to equalize the quotas of the several counties of the district and apportion any deficiencies in those counties among the towns that compose them. In this committee Richmond county was represented by Hon. Smith Ely, William Correy, Nathan Barrett, William H. Vanderbilt and Henry Lee Norris, the latter of whom was one of the secretaries of the meeting. Among other business done it was resolved to recognize and adopt the regiment being formed by Colonel Minthorne Tompkins as the regiment of the district, and the committee pledged itself to spare no effort to fill up the regiment as rapidly as possible, and to organize it so as to make it most efficient in the field and a credit to the district as well as the country.

Recruiting stations for this regiment were opened in all parts of the island. It was said that the officers at these rendezvous wore smiling countenances and made encouraging reports of the progress of the work. Fears of a draft were imminent, and this stimulated some to volunteer and others to contribute to the fund for extra bounties and relief for the families of volunteers. Up to the 6th of September there remained three hundred and ten of the quota of the county to be made up, but little more than half of the quota under the two last calls being filled.

About this time several deserters were captured on the island and returned to their regiments. The freedom of speech and of the press were shown to be capable of abuse, to the injury of the common interest. At this time it seemed important to guard against such abuses. Occasionally a man was arrested and confined in Fort Lafayette for disloyal expressions, but they were not held in such confinement for any considerable length of time.

A large number of Staten Island men about this time, September, 1862, enlisted in Spinola's brigade, which was encamped at East New York. As the months wore along recruits came in so that by the middle of the month fears of an immediate draft subsided, the quotas being nearly full. Southfield had exceeded hers, and Westfield and Northfield had filled theirs. The volunteer fund of Castleton was receiving liberal contributions. Of those which up to September 11th amounted to \$100 or more the following is a list: Barrett, Nephews & Co., \$300; Wm. S. Pendleton, \$300; John S. Westervelt, \$300; Daniel G.





Bacon, \$300; Crabtree & Wilkinson, \$200; Francis G. Shaw, \$300; Lucius Tuckerman, \$100; Edward F. Davison, \$100; Bodine Brothers, \$100; George C. Ward, \$300; John Martin, Jr., \$150; J. Freeman Tyson, \$100; Cornelius Du Bois, \$100; New York Dyeing and Printing Co., \$500; Thomas M. Rianhard, \$100; John C. Green, \$1,000; Ernest Fielder, \$100; John M. Pendleton, \$100; Edward Bement, \$200; C. C. Taber, \$300; Mrs. William Bard, \$200.

Under the famous internal revenue act, which went into effect about this time, the following persons were appointed assistant collectors for the towns of this county, which composed collection districts, each numbered as indicated: Westfield, No. 16, William A. Brown; Castleton, No. 17, Robert Rakestraw; Middletown, No. 18, Henry Mendell; Northfield, No. 19, Daniel Zeluff; Southfield, No. 20, John B. Jacobson.

By the latter part of October the material of the island had become so much exhausted by recruiting that the regiment which was intended to represent Staten Island, and be under command of Colonel Minthorne Tompkins, filled up slowly. The prospect of filling it soon became so faint, and the need of men in the field was so urgent that an order was issued by Inspector-General Van Vechten to consolidate three of its companies with the One hundred and Fifty-sixth which had left Kingston, Ulster county, with seven hundred men, and was then in the barracks in New York city hall park. Accordingly, on the 13th and 14th of November, the companies of Captains Schaffner, Shelton and Vaughn were transferred to that regiment. This gave rise to great dissatisfaction, and great excitement prevailed, amounting almost to a riot. In the midst of the tumult one man was stabbed in the back with a bayonet. The remaining island companies of Tompkins' regiment became disordered and took to the woods and hills, leaving the camp at Factoryville almost deserted, being occupied by only about forty officers and men. While in this condition, on Monday morning, the 17th, the barracks took fire and were nearly destroyed. The fire was supposed to be the work of an incendiary. The Richmond county regiment, which numbered (with a company of one hundred men from Flushing which was expected to join it), six hundred and fifty men, was now broken up. The remaining companies were transferred to the One hundred and Fifty-seventh, then encamped at East New York. Of these,



two companies, under Captains Mark Cox and William Hildebrandt, were mainly composed of Staten Island men. Colonel Tompkins was offered a position as lieutenant-colonel in the One hundred and Fifty-eighth, but declined. His adjutant was retained and his senior captain was made major of the One hundred and Fifty-sixth.

In this sluggish condition of the work of recruiting the prospect of a draft again began to rise. The day was appointed for the drawing to take place, and Judge H. B. Metcalfe was appointed commissioner for superintending it, and William G. Eadie examining surgeon. These officials sat daily at the surrogate's office, at Richmond, from October 22d till the day before the draft was to take place, to hear any claims of persons liable to military duty for exemption. But the efforts which were made here, by enthusiastic public meetings and other means, were sufficient to push forward the work so that no draft was required in Richmond county. At a meeting of the senatorial district committee at Jamaica on the 6th of November, the county was able to show the following encouraging report:

Towns.	Quota.	Enlisted.
Middletown.....	193	211
Castleton.....	209	241
Northfield. . . . .	150	127
Southfield.....	113	123
Westfield.....	123	94
County.....	788	796

List of men recruited on Staten Island by Charles G. Smith, First Lieutenant Company B, One Hundred and Thirty-second regiment, up to November 19, 1862.

From *Southfield*: William Church, Edward Henkel, Bryan Carney, Edward Jaspert, Peter Schmidt. From *Middletown*: Caspar Elmer, William Elmer, James Foley, Patrick Gorman, Smith W. Higgins, Robert Huston, William L. Ludlum, George Lambert, Conrad Liebacher, Edward B. Murray, Thos. McKee, Charles Ockhert, Bernard Schmit, Theodore Simonson, Frederick W. Taxter, Addison White, John Williams.

The following list was recruited at Port Richmond, by David Stothers, first lieutenant, afterward captain of Company K, the same regiment.

*Northfield*: Charles H. Jones, Jacob V. P. Long, Cornelius



Jones, sergeants; Charles J. Elms, Freeman W. Jones, corporals; Charles Applebee, Wm. G. E. Decker, John R. Patterson, Joseph Emery, William Durrua, George W. Smith, James W. Houseman, John H. Leonard. *Castleton*: James Mahoney, David McConnell, George Turner. *Southfield*: Gilbert H. Randolph.

The above were honorably discharged at the disbandment of the regiment. The following were discharged previously:

Hiram C. Decker, John A. Taylor, Hyacinth Burke, Michael Valliere, Andrew P. Van Pelt, John B. Corsen, and Garrett E. Van Pelt, Northfield; William C. Dunn, Southfield, and Joseph H. Caine, Castleton, for disability; Richard C. Johnson, Nicholas Cubberly, Vreeland Johnson, Bedell Jones, John Brinly, and Peter S. Brinly, Northfield, transferred to the navy; Henry Valliere, Northfield, to be Hospital Steward; Henry B. Tibbetts, Northfield, to U. S. Signal Corps; Charles E. Smith, Castleton, to Ninety-ninth regiment N. Y. V.; Jacob Bowman, Northfield, killed at Bachelor's Creek, N. C.; Edward V. Ford, sergeant, Northfield; Benjamin B. Kinsey, sergeant, Northfield; Abram B. Houseman, Castleton; George Davis, Northfield; James Wilson, Castleton, and Aaron Beatty, died in Andersonville prison; Jacob R. Decker, and William W. Stilwell, Northfield; Isaac B. Lewis, and James G. Woglom, Westfield, died of disease contracted in service, and James Shaunessy, Castleton, deserted.

We have the following particulars in regard to the Staten Island men who were in company B, of Tompkin's regiment, which after the consolidation with the One Hundred and Fifty-sixth became company K, of that regiment. Captain Shelton resigned at Long Island, on account of sickness. The officers then became James J. Hoyt, of Castleton, captain; Magnus Bouscher, first lieutenant, and Edward Openshaw, second lieutenant. The first and second served through the war, the third till June, 1864. First Sergeant Charles Westren, of Middletown, was promoted to be a captain, and remained, being now a captain in the regular army. William Seaton, of Castleton, sergeant, was promoted to the rank of a captain. John J. Farrell, of Castleton, sergeant, returned from a rebel prison at the close of the war, having been taken at Cedar Creek. John Peterson, private, became a first sergeant. Isaac Fullagar, Castleton, corporal, served through the war; Evan Riley, Castle-



ton, served through the war; Michael Cotter, Castleton, discharged for physical disability; William Gill, Castleton, and Cornelius Sullivan, drummer, served through the war,—were members of this company.

Early in January, 1863, the supervisors passed a resolution, authorizing an additional loan of twenty thousand dollars on the bonds of the county, for the payment of bounties and relief, trusting to the action of the legislature to sanction the same. The bill legalizing this action, as well as that previously had in raising money for war purposes passed the legislature February 21, 1863. Most of the towns drew upon this fund. The town of Southfield was the only one in the county that did not, but filled its quota under the calls of July, 1862, and paid its bounties entirely by voluntary contributions. These contributions in that town amounted to seven thousand four hundred and sixty two dollars. Bounties were paid to one hundred and twenty-two recruits, amounting to seven thousand three hundred and twenty dollars, and the balance was used for other purposes. In Northfield eighty-eight recruits received fifty dollars each, and ten dollars each additional was paid for recruiting them, making five thousand one hundred and thirty dollars paid in that town for filling these calls. In Westfield five thousand one hundred and forty dollars was expended for the same purpose. Meanwhile, the energies of the benevolent were constant in contributing to the relief and support of the families of those who had gone to the scenes of war, and to works of love and tender regard in the preparation of articles of necessity, comfort and luxury for the soldiers in the army and in the hospitals.

That some fear of opposition to the proposed draft of 1863, and to the plans of the government, was entertained thus early is shown by the following newspaper paragraph, printed in April, though what grounds there were, or to what extent they were manifest, does not appear. The opposition was not, however, of sufficient magnitude to bring about any serious results:

"A United States Detective paid a visit to the North Shore last week, to ascertain whether any anti-conscription meetings had been held in that quarter; and, if so, to get the names of the officers and speakers, what was said and done, and who attended the meetings. He states that he has the names of thirty-three individuals who require looking after; also that their





places of rendezvous are watched, and that the government has established a reliable telegraph station in the midst of them, or in other words, a spy to report their movements. The detective is said to favor grave stones as convenient places of observation."

The names of persons appointed to make the enrollment under the conscription act of 1863, which was made in June, were as follows: For Castleton, Edward Jones; Middletown, J. J. Clute; Northfield, Simon Haughwout; Southfield, John Jacobson; Westfield, ———.

The quota of Richmond county in the call of 1863, was for four hundred men, who were to be taken from those enrolled between the ages of twenty and thirty-five, unless a deficiency in that class should necessitate drawing upon the class beyond that age. While the question of enforcing the draft was being discussed, and its execution appeared as a probability of the near future, events developed which gave this locality a sudden and undesirable notoriety.

From its proximity to New York city this county could not but feel every pulsation of popular emotion that disturbed the bosom of that city, and when the celebrated draft riots of July, 1863, filled it with the horrors of an inferno it is perhaps no more than a reasonable consequence that some kindred spirit should find expression here. On the island the public mind was in a state of high fermentation. Riot was in the air, and it would seem that men hardly knew what they did. For two years the public mind here had been almost constantly wrought up to fever heat, and now the prospect of a draft being made to fill the quota of four hundred men in this county under the recent call, but few of whom were already enlisted, made a strain upon the public nerve which it was in a poor condition to bear with tranquility. For a moment the steady arm of patriotism seemed to falter, weakened as it had been by the drain upon it caused by the withdrawal of hundreds from the community to the field of the war. Sober counsels wavered and the influence of men of means was weak, because of the obnoxious clause in the conscription act which promised to exempt all drafted men who should pay three hundred dollars. In this weak moment the baser elements of society gathered strength, and disorder attempted to block the wheels of organized government.



In this critical moment the innocent colored population were among the first to receive the demoniacal thrusts of unchained hatred. In McKeon street, Stapleton, a large number of this class resided, and there was located their African church. On Tuesday evening, July 14th, crowds began to gather and indications of trouble appeared that alarmed the people of this neighborhood with fears that an attack upon them and upon this church was about to be made. Rumors were circulated that a mob was about to burn the houses of the negroes and their church, but the night passed without any such demonstration being made.

About the same time a large crowd, variously estimated to number from fifty to two hundred persons, a large number of whom were boys, proceeded to the Tompkins Lyceum, in Van Duzer street, and with the noisy demonstrations of a band of wild Indians, forced the outer door, and took all the muskets that were stored there in the drill-room of the Tompkins cadets. Another drill-room near Stapleton landing was similarly robbed of muskets. Different estimates placed the number of guns thus seized by this mob at from thirty to three hundred.

The mob, gathering numerical strength as it went, reached the Vanderbilt landing railroad station at about midnight, where they set fire to a building used as a car house, and burned it to the ground. Two engine companies who came to the scene were forbidden to interfere, but they were permitted to direct their efforts toward saving the dwelling of Mrs. Corson, whose house stood near by, and in this they succeeded.

The nucleus of another mob was formed on the same evening at Factoryville, which proceeded eastward, gathering strength as it proceeded, making night hideous with shoutings of "No Draft" and many other violent and threatening expressions, too odious to be repeated. At New Brighton they proceeded to the ice cream saloon of a colored man by the name of Green, who fortunately had been apprised of their coming, and had closed his place and fled. They then entered the drug store of Mr. Christie with such noisy demonstrations that the proprietor fled to the cellar for safety. But being assured that he was not the object of their search he returned, and the mob satisfied themselves that the negro Green was not there, and departed. While they were thus drifting about the streets of New Brighton the Rev. Mr. Conron, of St. Peter's church,



gained their ears, and by his influence they were pacified and induced to disperse and go to their homes.

On the afternoon of the following day a mob, consisting of nearly fifty men, made an attack upon the houses of the negroes living in McKeon street, Stapleton. These were mostly small one-story houses. One after another the windows were broken in, the doors torn down and the furniture and materials inside were broken up and thrown into the street. The inmates of these houses had fled to the woods on the previous evening, and this, no doubt, saved some of their lives. One house, belonging to one Wormsley, who was particularly obnoxious, and whom rumors had credited with advocating arming the blacks to assist in enforcing the draft, was burned to the ground. A three-story brick house occupied by families in the upper stories and a grocery store below, was completely "gutted," the mob helping themselves to groceries as they were thrown into the street. In one of the houses a lame man had remained. He was dragged from his house and heartlessly beaten, and others were kicked and beaten as they were met on the high ways. A few colored persons who remained quietly in their houses were unmolested, doubtless escaping the notice of or not being known to the leaders of the mob. An attempt was made to burn the church, but the fire was extinguished by a friendly hand before much damage was done. A colored coachman was attacked as he was driving his coach on the afternoon of the 13th, at Vanderbilt landing. Several men seized the horse, while others leaped upon the seat and commenced beating the driver. By the timely interference of a gentleman the negro was rescued and sent in a small boat to Fort Hamilton for safety.

On the north side of the island rumors of intended attacks upon the leading republicans and negroes were flying about and creating great alarm. Many families packed up their valuables and left their houses. In some the male members only remained to guard their homes while the female members went to some place of supposed safety. The negroes fled, some to the woods, and some to the Jersey shore. Private meetings of citizens were held, and guards were set at various points along the shore, and the streets were patrolled for several nights. No serious outbreak occurred there.

At Richmond, the sheriff, suspecting that an attempt would



be made to seize a negro prisoner who was in the jail on a charge of rape, obtained a military force from the camp at New Dorp and had the jail guarded for a day or two, and then had the prisoner referred to conveyed to the Tombs in New York city.

In this highly excited condition of the public mind a mass meeting was held at Clifton on Wednesday, the 15th. This was presided over by Messrs. William Shaw, Dwight Townsend, and Mr. Fellows, and was attended by many respectable citizens, the bulk of the meeting being made up of the laborers at the fortifications. The Rev. Father Lewis addressed the meeting with conciliatory language, exhorting respect to law and assuring them that no unjust demands would be made upon them. Speeches were also made by Messrs. Dwight Townsend, Robert Christie, Jr., and Mr. Hull, after which the following preamble and resolutions were passed :

“ *Whereas*, In the sense of this meeting the Conscription Act sought to be enforced by the Government is oppressive and unjust in its enactments, and under present circumstances uncalled for ; be it therefore

“ *Resolved*, 1. That we call upon the Governor of the State of New York to, without delay, have the constitutionality of this Conscription Act tested before our State courts, by whose decision we pledge ourselves to abide.

“ 2. That in case our State Courts should decide the Conscription to be constitutional, we will, under the \$300 clause, procure a substitute for every drafted man in the town of Southfield who is not able or not willing to leave his home and family.

“ 3. That we pledge ourselves, one and all, to support, with all our might, the Government in its great efforts to restore the Union and the full force of the Constitution in all the States ; and to uphold everywhere, by word and example, the principles of law and order.”

Handbills were also distributed, signed by the town officers, announcing that the draft had been stopped. This action probably averted any uprising of rioters that might have been brewing in that section of the island.

But it would appear that riot was in the atmosphere and as though violence had a free license for the time. On Thursday, the 16th, two ruffians attacked John Ryan, of Cherry lane, Castleton, as he was going home from work, and brutally beat





him and robbed him of his clothes which he wore, leaving him only a shirt on his person. They had stolen a horse and wagon at Port Richmond, and continued their evening's riot by knocking another man down, smashing a vehicle and "cleaning out" a tavern, after which they were secured and committed to jail.

But a still more serious affray occurred at Vanderbilt landing on the 20th. In the early evening two or three soldiers were in a drinking saloon, when one of them fired his musket at a boy. This enraged some others who were present to such an extent that they set upon the soldiers and beat them so badly as to leave them for dead. A train of cars came up just then, having on board a company of soldiers, who came out and commenced firing upon the crowd that had by this time collected. They no doubt took the crowd to be a mob gathering and determined to scatter it. In doing so their shot took effect in the body of one Charles Murphy with such force that he died shortly after. About ten men were arrested by the soldiers and taken to camp. One or both of the soldiers who began the disturbance died within a few days.

The county subsequently paid damages for property destroyed in these riots as follows, to which expense may be added about ten thousand dollars incurred in contesting several of the claims in the courts: John B. Smith, \$61.00; S. I. R. R. Co., \$1,336.00; J. M. Evans & Son, \$222.38; Henrietta Corson, \$91.50; William Wilson, \$3,697.96; Sarah Cornish, \$585.21; Jacob Gunsett, \$215.46; Rosetta Graves, \$791.97; Mary Brown, \$197.95; Abraham Wilson, \$352.08; Aaron Dunn, \$297.18; Patrick Sullivan, \$900.00; M. Tool, \$382.50; John Lewis, \$17.00; Levi Purnell, \$700.98; Edward Felix, \$888.94; Charles Wormsley, \$330.18; Oliver Wilson, \$354.40; J. J. Galligher, \$120.95; Daniel A. Lewis, \$798.87; Eleanor S. Wormsley, \$1,187.08; David Wormsley, \$3,638.44; total, \$17,207.99.

On the 25th of August the supervisors passed resolutions authorizing the county treasurer to raise, on the bonds of the county, fifty thousand dollars to be appropriated as might be necessary in providing for those who might be drafted and were not able to pay the exemption fee of three hundred dollars, under the conscription act which, it was expected, would be enforced in the First congressional district. The enrollment had been revised and corrected throughout the county preparatory to such a draft.



The draft took place at Jamaica, on Monday, August 30th, under the supervision of Provost Marshall Edwin Rose. The day passed without any disorderly demonstrations. The number enrolled from this county was 2,205, which was distributed among the towns as follows: Castleton, 559; Southfield, 463; Northfield, 444; Westfield, 438; Middletown, 301. The number to be drawn from these was five hundred and ninety-four, which included an addition of fifty per cent. to make up the deficiency which should result from exemptions.

After the draft was made notices were served on the drafted men, requiring them to appear before the provost marshal at Jamaica by a certain time or be accounted as deserters. The officer whose duty it was to serve these notices, while so engaged in Wood road was set on by the women of the neighborhood, armed with brickbats and hot water, and so fierce was their onslaught that the officer fled before them. Later he secured the assistance of a squad of men from a neighboring camp and completed the fulfillment of his duties. But few men were actually gained for the service by this draft, the majority of those who were held paying the commutation fee of three hundred dollars. The supervisors meantime raised the proposed loan for this purpose from fifty thousand dollars, as it had been fixed by their vote of August 25, to seventy five thousand dollars. This action was approved by resolutions passed at a mass meeting of the citizens and tax-payers of the county held at the pagoda at Clifton park on the 19th of September. The bonds issued for this purpose were disposed of in a very few days. The five hundred and ninety four drafted men were accounted for October 14th, in the following manner: Seventy four were aliens; ten furnished substitutes; ninety-four were exempt for physical disability; one hundred and three were exempt for other causes; one hundred and sixty-two commuted, and one hundred and fifty-one failed to report.

Under the call of the president for three hundred thousand men made in October, 1863, which was to be filled by January 5, 1864, the quota from each town of this county was: Castleton, seventy-seven; Southfield, sixty-five; Northfield, sixty-two; Westfield, sixty-two; Middletown, forty-two. Two months passed seeing but little done toward meeting it. A mass meeting was called by the supervisors, which convened at the court house on the 19th of December, to give popular ex-



pression to the means to be adopted to meet the call. Resolutions were passed calling on the supervisors to raise one hundred and twenty thousand dollars, or as much of that sum as might be necessary, and to pay to each volunteer, drafted man or substitute, counting in the quota, four hundred dollars, and to open a recruiting office in each town and to appoint suitable persons to attend to the same. About the 1st of January, 1864, reenlistments were taking place in the field, and these were allowed to count to the credit of localities as though they had taken place at home, when so specified and arranged. By this and other means the supervisors were able to fill the quota and so avoid a draft. The quota was completed early in March.

We may remark in passing, that the early months of 1864, witnessed an unusual degree of activity in business on the north shore of the island. Real estate seemed unusually active there and also on other parts of the island, especially on the western shore.

Another call for troops was made in March, 1864. To provide for it the supervisors met on the 18th and determined to contract with some responsible party to fill the quota of one hundred men which belonged to this county to furnish. They published an advertisement on the following day inviting parties wishing to contract for filling the quota to present themselves with their sureties at a meeting appointed for the 22d instant. A draft was ordered for April 15th, if the quota was not otherwise filled before that time. The supervisors on the 11th preceding, offered three hundred and fifty dollars each for men—two hundred dollars of which was to be paid to the recruit, and one hundred and fifty dollars to the party who should procure him. The quota was filled during April.

A new enrollment of persons liable to do military duty was ordered in May, and the work of enrolling began about the 1st of June. The names of all who could prove causes of exemption were stricken off, and those who had been omitted or had since come within the range of age or residence were added.

In July a call was made for 500,000 more. To arrange for filling the quota under this a mass meeting was held at Clifton Park on the 26th, when resolutions were passed placing the entire business of raising money and filling the quota in the hands of the supervisors and calling upon them to exercise



those duties. On August 8th the committee which had been appointed to solicit subscriptions to a loan reported to the supervisors that they had secured \$75,000. Under this call the quotas for this county were: Middletown, 123; Southfield, 70; Westfield, 77; Castleton, 154; Northfield, 119; making a total of 543. The supervisors, on the 22d of August, resolved to establish a recruiting office on the island, and offered \$200 for each recruit and \$200 additional to the agent or broker procuring him, or \$400 to every man liable to draft who should secure a substitute to be credited to the county. Camp Washington, just outside the quarantine walls, was designated as the recruiting depot. For \$600 deposited with the supervisors by any citizen liable to draft, before September 5th, they would undertake to procure a substitute for him, such substitutes to be supplied in the order in which applications and deposits were made. The prices mentioned were not sufficient to procure the needed recruits. The price advanced until \$700 apiece was paid for them. Then about the latter part of September the quota was still one hundred and eighty men short, and the county had no ready money with which to pay for more. Arrangements were effected, however, by which the county bonds were exchanged for men, and the quota was filled, though a form of drafting was begun on the 3d of October.

About this time large sums of money were made speculating in recruits. Human flesh was bought and sold like cattle in the shambles. Fresh emigrants from foreign countries and others, whom circumstances in various ways had brought to this step, were seized and controlled by brokers who understood the means of holding them, and offered in the market where they would command the highest price. The poor victims themselves received perhaps a paltry hundred dollars, more or less, while the greater part of the money paid by the people went into the pockets of brokers, officials and others who had the manipulating of the business. Enormous sums of money were raised on corporate obligations and appropriated with a recklessness that would have been appalling at any other time than under the exigency of the hour. Charges of complicity with the brokers and sharing in the spoils were often made by popular gossip against the servants of the people. It was impossible at the time and is still more so at this late day to reach the facts which would decide in every case whether those





charges were true or false. Whilst the meagre and often imperfect records which boards of supervisors and other officials left sometimes give reasonable ground for suspicion that crooked work was being carried on behind the scenes, it is doubtless true that many an honest man, whose actions were prompted by patriotic and unselfish motives, has been made the object of unjust imputations in connection with this business. These remarks are founded on observations made in the history of different counties. They apply to Richmond as well as to many others.

A revision of the enrollment was made in December, 1864, under the direction of an enrolling board in each town, which was composed of the supervisor, town clerk and one inspector of election.

A mass meeting was held at the court house, January 6, 1865, to provide for raising the quota under the call of December 19th, for 300,000 men. The supervisors were instructed to fill the quota and raise the money necessary on the credit of the county. They later resolved to raise two hundred men. Frequent meetings were held by the board, but the work of filling the quota progressed slowly. A draft finally took place on the 25th of February, at which four hundred and forty-six names were drawn. Previous to the drawing the supervisors, February 18th, offered bounties of \$300 for one year's men, \$400 for two years' men, \$600 for three years' men and \$100 additional "hand money" to the person presenting the recruit, or the same additional sum to the recruit presenting himself. The same bounties, but not the "hand-money," were offered to men liable to draft who should secure substitutes before the draft. The drafted men were not required to report as long as enlistments were active.

Great dissatisfaction arose during the latter part of 1864 and the early part of 1865 in regard to the management of the county finances. It was charged that the supervisors and officials acting under their authority were using more money in procuring recruits than was necessary, and intimations were even promulgated that those officials were using their positions to enrich themselves by sharing with the brokers the enormous commissions that were allowed for procuring recruits.

Whether much or little foundation existed for this dissatisfaction, it arose to such a pitch that public meetings were held



in some of the towns to discuss measures for the protection of the tax-payers against the wanton increase of their burdens. The debt of the county at the beginning of 1865 had reached an amount exceeding \$700,000. Such a meeting was held at Giesser's hotel, Middletown, on the first of February, at which resolutions were passed declaring that in the opinion of the majority of the citizens of the town there was great mismanagement in town and county offices, owing to a lack of capacity and economy in public matters, resulting in enormous taxation for which the citizens received no due return; that a new, intelligent and economical administration of affairs must be inaugurated; that to accomplish this end they would lay aside party considerations and put forth their utmost exertions to elect such men as by public consent were without suspicion or reproach; and to appoint a committee to aid in bringing before the state legislature the petition of the people of the county for a thorough investigation of the accounts of the supervisors. A similar meeting was held at Fireman's hall, Port Richmond, on the 8th inst., at which similar resolutions were passed.

The result of this agitation was the election of a board of supervisors, nearly all of whom were new members, and men in whom the people had full confidence as to their ability and disposition to discharge the responsible duties of their office in a conscientious and creditable manner. Still however, a change in the board of supervisors did not remedy all the evils which annoyed the people. Abuses existed in the management of the recruiting office, as the following paragraph from the "*Gazette*," at the time will illustrate.

"A SWINDLING SHOP.—The recruiting office at Nautilus Hall, Tompkinsville, Staten Island. The majority of the persons brought to this place, or going there voluntarily are swindled out of a large part of the bounties they receive from the County, and the harpies who make part and parcel of the machine operated there, fill their pockets with the plunder. These facts we have from the most credible witnesses, from whom we can obtain dates, names, amounts and particulars of transactions, if necessary. The iniquities have become known to the Supervisors, and they have made strong efforts to prevent their continuance, but in spite of all their labor and remonstrances, there is but too much reason to know that they have



continued with unabated force, although possibly disguised to some extent."

By the end of March, 1865, the quota under the last call was filled, to the number of about two hundred and eighty-eight men. The surroundings of the recruiting station, and the management of that work, as well as the labors of the board of supervisors to reform its unrighteous practices, are graphically pictured in the following language by a local paper at the time.

\* Col. Barrett, Supervisor of Castleton, and Hon. Thomas Child, of Northfield, visited the recruiting station almost daily and remained several hours. The attention they gave to the matter and the vigilance they exercised considerably facilitated the operations, although we understand that many men were fleeced of their money almost under their very eyes, and they were quite unable to prevent it in consequence of want of power over the physician and the mustering officer in charge. \* \* \*

“A sight of the cormorants, vultures, harpies, blacklegs, loafers and swindlers who have held high carnival in and about the recruiting station ever since there were men to be gulled and robbed, and tricks to be played, would have disgusted any one but his infernal majesty himself. Nor were these vile characters all imported, but some of our own citizens, slyly at first, and then more openly, indulged in similar practices, and to their lasting shame be it said, greedily grasped at and got a share of the spoils. Men of mature years, men of respectability as the world defines the term, came to look upon an association with the lowest grade of society, and the reception of a handful of bank notes from unfortunate wretches whose families at that moment lacked bread, as a thing quite unobjectionable! As there is now nothing left to pick but the bones, we trust the creatures will disperse, and that such a crew will never assemble again on this side of Tophet.”

The various sums authorized to be raised on bonds of the county for the purposes of the war at different times were as follows, the dates given indicating when the resolutions were passed by the board of supervisors:

Aug. 22, 1862, for relief of volunteers' families.....	\$20,000
Dec. 16,       "               "               "               ".....	20,000
Aug. 25, 1863, for relief of drafted men.....	50,000
Sept. 9,       "               "               "               ".....	25,000



Dec. 29, 1863, to obtain volunteers.....	125,000
Feb. 13, 1864,       "       " .....	180,000
July 28,       "       bounties for volunteers.....	250,000
Jan. 28, 1865, for filling the quota.....	75,000
Feb. 16,       "       "       " .....	75,000
Feb. 25,       "       "       " .....	75,000
<hr/>	
Total amount.....	\$895,000

Not only in the disbursement of funds for the relief of its citizens and the support of dependent families of volunteers, but in supplying the strong arm of her native citizens to fight the battles of their country, Staten Island bore her full proportion of the burdens of the war. Material was furnished to forty-five regiments of infantry, six regiments of artillery, and four of cavalry, besides some to the contingents of other states. The island was more especially represented in the Empire brigade, where it had nearly two companies; in the Excelsior brigade of the army of the Potomac; in the Eighty-second, One hundred and Thirty-third, One hundred and Fifty-sixth and One hundred and Seventy-fifth New York infantry; in Serrell's famous Engineer regiment in the far West; in the old Seventy-ninth "Highlanders"; in the "Mounted Rifles"; in the Fourth artillery; and in the Fifth, Sixth, Ninth, and Fifty-third "Zouaves." According to careful estimates more than eight hundred men joined the army from this county. Of this number, who left their homes full of health and vigor, it is estimated that about one hundred and eighty fell on the field or died of sickness or wounds in our camps. Nearly forty were brought back here to be buried among their kindred.

The Seventy-ninth Highlanders, N. Y. S. M., left New York for Washington on Sunday, June 2, 1861, having, in one company connected with it, the following men from Staten Island: John W. Morse, Herman C. Buecke, Walter N. Brown, Theodore Hall, George H. McCready, William White, J. J. Thaxter, A. Miranda, Rheinhart Snyder, Richard Wall, James Bancker, Edward Bancker, John Coughie, David Wilkins, Benjamin Wilkins, Daniel Beatty, William B. Lusch, William Simonson, Edward Barker, James Breen, Edward Brice, Michael Kirkman, Robert Kelly, Patrick Carlin, Bernard Scanlon, Thomas McAdams, George Howarth, David Howarth, Eugene Burke, John Johnson, James Colgan, William





Ross, John Racey, John Breen, David Sands, Peter Tushingham, William Smith, J. Smith, Richard Barrett, Charles Wilhelm, Charles Piratzki, Philip Daly.

During the war the island was made a rendezvous for bringing together different parts of organizations preparatory to moving forward to the seat of war. A large number of regiments were encamped here for longer or shorter periods, while awaiting more perfect organization or drill, or more definite orders for moving. No complete record of these can be given, but we have, at considerable pains, gathered fragments from which we are able to give the list of camps and many of the organizations that occupied them, with some indication of the dates when they were so occupied, and occasionally some other information in regard to them. This information we condense in the following paragraphs :

Camp Washington was located at the quarantine grounds, partly inside and partly outside the walled enclosure. Barracks were erected on the outside. Here were Wilson's Zouaves, May and June, 1861 ; Serrell's regiment of artisans and engineers, August and September, 1861 ; Yates' Rifles, August, 1861 ; the Empire Zouaves, August, 1861 ; German Rangers, September, 1861 ; Siegel Rifles, September, 1861 ; Swain's Cavalry, March, 1862 ; Colonel Tompkins' Regiment, September, 1862, whence it was moved to barracks erected for it on land of Colonel Barrett at Factoryville ; Second Duryea's Zouaves, October, 1862 ; inside the walls were Allen's Regiment, May, 1861 ; Colonel Bartlett's Naval Brigade, May, 1861 ; Third Irish Volunteers, August, 1861 ; Union Rifles, September, 1861 ; Scott's Nine Hundred (Eleventh N. Y. Cavalry), March, 1862 ; Eighty-first N. Y., March, 1862 ; First National (Monitors), August and September, 1862.

Camp Arthur was located near the quarantine grounds. It was established in June, 1861 ; the British Volunteers and McClellan Rifles were here in August, 1861 ; and the Lancers in September, 1861.

A camp was made on the Dr. Smith farm at Old Town in May, 1861. This farm presented a level sward of about one hundred acres, giving a fine parade ground. The old stone house was occupied by the officers.

Camp Vanderbilt was near New Dorp. Here the Washington Zouaves were encamped in September, 1861.



Camp Yates was at New Dorp. Here were the Seventh regiment and the Thirty-second cavalry in May, 1861. While the latter regiment was here the ladies of Staten Island presented it with a flag. The presentation was made with appropriate ceremonies on June 5th. About seventy-five ladies were present. Dr. Ephraim Clark made the presentation with a very happy little speech, which was responded to by Mr. Matthewson, the officer in command. The flag was then raised on its staff, amid the cheers of the assembled multitude.

Camp Lafayette was at New Dorp. It was occupied by the Garde Lafayette (Fifty-fifth) in August and September, 1861; and by the Warren Rifles in March, 1862.

Camp Leslie, at Clifton Park, was near Fort Tompkins. Here were Col. Cone's Clinton Guard, August, 1861; and the D'Epeneuil Zouaves (Fifty third regiment), September, 1861.

Camp McClellan was on land of Samuel Burger, near Factoryville, on land lying between the Shore road and Castleton avenue. A high, board fence was built around it, and a guard house and other buildings were erected. The McClellan rifles were here September to November, 1861. Their departure for the front, on the twenty-second, was, according to a local paper, "to the great joy of those who resided in the vicinity of the camp. They burned four hundred feet of Mr. Edward Bement's fence, had a great liking for chickens, and some of them were not averse to anything that hands could carry off."

Camp Herndon was located at Stapleton flats, and here the Ira Harris cavalry was encamped in August and September, 1861.

Camp Morrison was on A. Ward's land, at the base of Pavilion hill. It was occupied by the Cameron light infantry in August, 1861.

Camp Low, at Elm Park, after being occupied a few weeks by the Morgan artillery, was broken up about the middle of November, 1861. Of their departure it was said:

"Such a scene as ensued on Wednesday night and the succeeding morning baffles description. Suffice it to say that in the afternoon, when preparations were being made for the departure of a portion of the regiment, a large number of men were found with their eyes in mourning, holes in their heads, bloody noses, palsied legs and tongues, torn clothes, and in a dilapidated condition generally. There were, of course, many honorable exceptions to this rule. Companies A to H left the



camp and took their way to the shore, and were received on board of the steamboat *Allas*, and thence transferred to the cars. Quite a number of men were missing. Those whose legs refused to support them were carried down in carts; such as had only a small brick in their hats managed to get along pretty well with a comrade supporting them on either side. While waiting at the wharf the soldiers indulged in cheering."

Camp Ward was at Port Richmond. It was occupied by Colonel Doubleday's regiment while forming from November, 1861, to February 10, 1862.

Camp Scott, one of the most notable camps of the period, was at Stapleton. Here were the Excelsior Brigade, May, 1861; Ira Harris Guards, September, 1861; Second Ira Harris Cavalry (Sixth N. Y.), December, 1861; and Corcoran's Irish Legion, September to November, 1862. While it was occupied by the Excelsior Brigade it was under the command of Col. Don. Williamson. In order to preserve the peace and security of the neighboring inhabitants an order given by General Sickles was promulgated throughout the camp on the 30th of May, requiring field officers to be present with their regiments in camp, forbidding officers or privates leaving camp without the permission of specified officers and in accordance with certain restrictions, requiring a regular system of drill, directing the severe punishment of trespassing on or interference with the property or persons of citizens, forbidding the sale of intoxicating liquors in or about the encampment, and calling upon the local authorities to withhold licenses from taverns in the neighborhood. By the enforcement of these orders and improved discipline, the annoyances of drunken and marauding bands of men from the encampments were in a measure obviated. A picket was placed at the door of every open liquor saloon in the neighborhood to prevent the men from the camp getting liquor. The following description of the camp was given in June, 1861:

"Camp Scott wears a beautiful and picturesque appearance. Across the broad plateau selected for the encampment, large numbers of white tents gleam in the sunshine. Among them are broad streets and avenues, and with their four thousand tenants the place seems the site of some bustling city sprung into existence in a night. Stricter discipline prevails than in most of the camps we have seen. Around the edge, but in no instance inside of the lines, men and women with apples, candies,



oranges, nuts and various tempting articles, ply their trade, and do a good business. On Sunday afternoon, in the expectation of seeing a full dress parade, great numbers of visitors were upon the ground. Carriages, carts, and jaunting cars of all sorts and sizes; men, women, children and babies of all kinds and degrees were there."

The condition of this camp and its surroundings in the latter part of 1861 are set forth in the published diary of an army surgeon (Thomas I. Ellis, M. D.) who had medical supervision over it for a while, and who writes as follows.

"The wooden building used as a guard house I found one of the most wretched and filthy holes imaginable; the roof leaky, the boarded floors had been torn up and used for kindling wood by the prisoners confined in it, and all those who for weeks had been locked up there had accumulated a heap of filth, composed of the rejected food and offal of every kind, which sent forth an intolerable and unhealthy stench. I at once determined on the removal of the prisoners to better quarters, and on examining the dozen or more unfortunates, ordered four to the hospital, and recommended to the commandant of the post, who accompanied me, the discharge of four others. The remainder being deserters, confined under written charges preferred against them, who, at great trouble and expense, had been brought back from Boston, he had no authority or desire to liberate. To obtain a suitable building to use for a guard house was a matter of no small difficulty, there being but three others near the camp: one, the hospital, I had nearly full of patients; another, the post sutler's establishment, was too large, and was indispensable to the camp, as most of the officers' and all the hospital food was cooked in it. I found, however, a smaller wooden building which belonged to the former sutler of the Sickles Brigade and recommended the commandant of the post to take possession of it and make the necessary changes to adapt it for use as a guard house.

"Having made these arrangements, and having had the hospital building repaired and heated with large stoves, and the bedding properly cared for, I was able to control the epidemic then raging; and, before two weeks had expired, the sick report decreased from one hundred and six to sixty-four. There was still another fruitful source of disorder and disease, which, though not in the camp, exercised a wonderful and pernicious





influence on the men. On the roadside which led to the steam-boat landing, and within an eighth of a mile, there stood a frame cottage in which the vilest liquor was sold, and from whence it was daily smuggled into camp, causing drunkenness with all its attendant ill consequences, and sickness from exposure, as the men, on getting intoxicated, would ramble off into the adjoining woods, and there lie down on the damp ground, certain to awake in the morning with a violent cold or the prevalent sore throat; besides these ill effects the officers found this place a source of great annoyance, and I was not at all grieved on passing the place one day where this rum-mill had stood, to find it torn down. On inquiry, I learned that the evening previous a fight occurred between the keeper of the place and some of the soldiers, who, maddened with the vile stuff drank on the premises, proceeded to blows, and in the *melee* which followed, the cottage was entirely gutted, and then levelled to the ground. Several of the men who participated in this affair were, I found, on my daily visit to the guard house, doing penance for it; but, as a few days showed that the removal of the groggery was a blessing to the camp, they were let off with a lighter punishment than would otherwise have been their lot. [This groggery was familiarly known as "THE CANTEEN."]

"The isolated position of the camp was one of its strongest recommendations, and went far in influencing the selection, in spite of the soft, muddy nature of the ground, and the difficulty in guarding it against desertion by the men, and thieving by the Staten Islanders—a nest of whom from Rocky Hollow made nightly visits, and generally succeeded in carrying off some booty. One night it would be a government saddle; another, a sack of oats, or even a horse; the aggregate loss to the government, by these depredations, was considerable, nor could the utmost vigilance of the officers prevent it."

Late in December, 1861, Camp Scott was vacated, and it was not again occupied until the Corcoran Legion occupied it in the summer of 1862. They remained until the early part of November, and when they left, the following article was printed in a local paper, giving us a glimpse of the estimation in which they were held by the community in whose neighborhood they had been encamped.

"The Corcoran Legion has departed, and who is sorry? Not



the farmer whose hen roosts were robbed and whose fences were carried away for camp fires—not the peaceable citizen who found his safest place to be within his own house after night-fall, nor his wife and daughters who were insulted in broad day and jeered at with foulest language by the ruffian soldiery—not the public officers of the county whose writs were disobeyed and who dare not arrest a man of their number unless they run the risk of having daylight let through their unfortunate bodies by bayonet thrusts—not the city police who were paid for returning deserters by a volley of stones at their heads, and considered themselves lucky in escaping with whole bones. We trust that the quiet of Camp Scott may never again be disturbed, and night made hideous by such a collection of barbarians as the Corcoran Legion for the most part were. There were good men among them, but they were rare. Should we relate all the well authenticated tales of horrible things connected with this camp from its organization to its breaking up we would scarce be believed.

“Men have been kidnapped and taken to the camp and made to serve against their will—their calls for help wasted upon the wind, and the efforts of their friends for their release found to be useless. Young boys and others, many of them sickly and unfit for duty, have been seduced by the wiles of the recruiting officers from homes where they were tenderly reared and where affectionate parents, when they learned their loss, mourned their children as dead. Some rushed to the courts and judges for aid for relatives and friends, only to learn with dismay that even the ragged sentries who guarded the camp were more powerful than the learned judge upon the bench, and that the colonels and captains defied the process of the courts and cursed all who interfered with military rule.

“A gentleman informed us last week that he saw one of the officers strike an unoffending drummer boy in the face with his sword, cutting him through the cheek to the bone, and breaking loose several teeth, so that the boy spit them out of his mouth with the blood! The boy was at a distance from an affray which was taking place, and neither spoke nor acted with regard to it, and the blow could only have been caused by the desire of the officer to vent his brutality upon some one, it mattered not whom.”

Camp Decker was the camping ground of the Second regi-



ment of Fire Zouaves in August, 1861; and of the Governor's Guard in September, 1861. At Tompkinsville were also encamped the Second light artillery in December, 1861; and the Seventy-eighth regiment in March, 1862. At New Dorp the Thirteenth Brooklyn regiment was encamped in September, 1861; the Stanton Legion, July to September, 1862; the One Hundred and Sixty-ninth N. Y., October, 1863; and the One Hundred and Fifty-ninth, November, 1862.

Camp Sprague was located at New Dorp. The following description of it by a visitor in May, 1863, will be interesting to many:

"It consists of a row of barracks upon three sides of an extensive field, capable, it is said, of accommodating ten thousand men. On the fourth side it is protected by a high board fence, through which is the entrance to the camp. This fence is erected not so much to keep *outsiders* from going in as to prevent *insiders* from coming out; and though easily scaled from the outside, presents an insurmountable barrier to the poor skedaddler within. After considerable parleying at the gate, and a severe scrutiny of our countenance, and the summoning of the officer of the guard, and the officer of the day, until we were thoroughly impressed with our utter insignificance, we were finally admitted, but having entered, we were at liberty to go whither the spirit moved us.

"The camp is under the command of Colonel Lansing, but under the immediate charge of Lieutenant Colonel Loeve, a very pleasant and gentlemanly officer, with considerable *bon homie* expressed in his countenance. His headquarters are very tastefully decorated in front with grass plats and flower beds, and pleasantly shaded by three or four pear trees in full bloom.

"We next visited the hospital, which is under the charge of Dr. Ephraim Clark, of our island, who was recently appointed to the post by General Wool. We are informed that when the Doctor first took charge of the hospital, nothing could exceed the filthy and comfortless condition of the place—now it is a model of neatness and comfort, with a complete assortment of medical stores and surgical instruments. The ladies of the neighborhood, whose sympathies he has enlisted in behalf of the camp, have kindly presented the Doctor with jellies and domestic wines for the use of the sick. There are but few con-



fined in the hospital at present. We noticed one poor fellow suffering from a pistol shot wound in the arm received some time since while insubordinate. He showed us the ball, which was completely flattened in its passage through the bone.

"From the hospital we visited the gardens in front of the men's barracks, which we had heard highly spoken of. They certainly exhibited a great deal of taste and skill, and would do credit to any landscape gardener. Here was a beautiful Union shield blooming in green sod and moss, with the word 'LIBERTY' engraven in evergreen upon it—there an *Emerald Harp* from the Emerald Isle, in a soft bed of white sand—and beside it a full spread eagle with a shield on his breast, and a streamer with the motto '*E Pluribus Unum*.' A little further on, a mortar of sod mounted on a little bank threatened hourly destruction to a little band of flowers who were endeavoring to scale the bank and take possession. Still further on, the engineers had erected beautiful models in sod of rifle pits and earthworks, like Lilliputian forts. There were many other pretty designs, and the lettering in all cases was particularly well done. In the center of this camp ground a large flag staff is about being erected, which will add greatly to the beauty of the camp.

"There are about eleven hundred men at present in camp, although we believe the roll calls for over fourteen hundred. There are regiments and parts of regiments among them—the 'Seymour Cavalry,' 'Les Enfants Perdus' or 'Lost Children' (a French Regiment), and a corps of engineers. There are, we are informed, representatives from almost every European nation—English, Irish, French, Spanish, Italian, German, Swede, Dane, Russian and even *John Chinaman*. It is quite a little world in itself, and one is forcibly reminded in visiting it, of the confusion of tongues at the Tower of Babel.

"The Rev. Dr. Irving, we understand, is laboring earnestly among them, and has already effected much good. Bibles and tracts in different languages have already been largely circulated among them."

A serious riot took place at this camp on the 13th of May, 1863, which resulted in the death of one soldier and the wounding of two others. Some of the troops quartered here had been in camp for several months without receiving any of the bounty money which was due them. This fact had given rise to great





discontent on the part of those who had been thus slighted. Desertions from camp were taking place every night, so that the ranks were filling up very slowly. On the morning of the day above referred to groups of men could be seen collecting in different parts of the parade ground discussing with vehemence and indignation the subject of their complaint and declaiming bitterly against the deception which had been practiced upon them. In vain did several officers try to appease their wrath with the oft repeated story that their grievances would shortly be adjusted. They determined to take matters into their own hands, and leave the camp.

Accordingly, about noon the Burnside Rifles armed themselves with clubs, axes and stones, and headed by two drummers, marched defiantly toward the main entrance of the camp. Here, however, they were met by Colonel Lave, who had been informed of the threatened movement and had provided a strong guard of picked men for the emergency. Upon being ordered by the colonel to return to their quarters, the men set up a yell of defiance, one of them hurling a large stone which struck the colonel a violent blow on the side. As soon as he recovered from the shock he sprang into the midst of the mob and arrested the man who threw the stone; the others, being cowed by his resolute action, offered meanwhile no resistance.

The mutineers now turned in another direction. Marching directly to the south side of the barracks they determined to cut their way out, and about twenty-eight men actually succeeded in doing so before their progress could be stopped. The "Enfants Perdus" were marched to the scene of action and ordered to fire upon them, which they did, resulting in the death of one man and the supposed mortally wounding of another. The twenty-eight who had escaped were subsequently captured by a revenue cutter while attempting to cross over to Jersey in a boat which they had taken for the purpose. They were subsequently conveyed to Governor's island, where they were put in irons.

In the course of the day a demonstration was made against the sutler's department, but was put down without much trouble. About ten o'clock in the evening flames were seen issuing from the stables adjoining the hospital department. The energy of the officers and men succeeded in saving some valuable horses that were in these buildings, and also, by great ex-



ertions, the hospital itself, which was at one time seriously endangered. The patrol guard was strengthened, and this effectually prevented any making their escape amid the confusion consequent upon the fire.

Squads of soldiers were detailed that afternoon to go to the different ferries and look out for any deserters who might attempt to leave the island by the ferry-boats. One of the guard at Stapleton landing, named Spellissy, while attending to this duty, attempted to arrest two young men whom he took to be deserters, but who claimed to have been honorably discharged from the service. In the scuffle which ensued one Donahue, a by-stander, came to the assistance of the young men, and after a hand to hand encounter with Spellissy broke from him and ran away, when the latter fired upon him, the ball making a wound in the thigh of Donahue, and also striking the knee of a little child in its passage. Spellissy was arrested, and barely escaping being lynched at the hands of the incensed populace, was confined in Richmond jail.

It would appear to be the fact that some grounds of complaint existed with the men, owing to their treatment and their fare. One who had inquired into the subject somewhat wrote: "All through the winter complaints have come to us from soldiers quartered at New Dorp and Tompkinsville that their bounties have been withheld; and for a long time, at the latter camp ground, miserable fare has been loudly talked of, and on more than one occasion the men have demolished the cook-house where, they insisted, decayed food had been prepared for them. I have conversed with a large number of these men, and discovered that they were not of the commoner sort, being very intelligent, and many of them sons of thrifty farmers in the northern and western sections of this state; consequently they know what decent treatment is, and felt that they had a right to expect it at the hands of the government or its officers. Hundreds of them have 'skedaddled' in disgust, and doubtless have borne to the ears of the community to which they belong, dismal tidings of the state of affairs in Uncle Samuel's camp, and pictured in their mental vision scenes to which *they* are likely to remain strangers, at least as far as they are able."

A small number of skeleton organizations, or parts of organizations, were brought together here and consolidated in June, 1863. Among these remnants were the "Tompkins," "H.



Seymour" and "Davis" cavalry, the "Blair Rifles," "Seymour Light Infantry," "Defenders," "Burnside Rifles," "Pratt Guard," and the "Westchester Light Infantry."

General McClellan was present at a grand review which took place at this camp September 8, 1863. There were about three thousand five hundred men in the various commands then organizing here, and the occasion called out about eight thousand spectators. The affair was said to be one of the most brilliant military demonstrations ever witnessed on the island. General McClellan having taken a position, the troops marched in review before him, the following regiments taking part and moving in the order named: Eleventh N. Y., Thirty-first, Duryea's Zouaves, Thirty-fourth, Ninth, Twelfth cavalry, Corning's Eighteenth light cavalry, Twenty-first cavalry (dismounted), Seventeenth, Thirteenth and some other regiments. After the column had passed the general addressed the soldiers, many of whom had been in the service with him, in the following language:

"My COMRADES—I am glad and sad and proud to meet you again. (Loud cheers). I am glad because we are all glad to meet old comrades and brothers in arms. (Renewed cheering). I am sad because I am reminded in seeing you, of your brethren slain on our fields of battle. I remember, too, our last fight, opposite Warrentown. I am proud because I call to mind all our battles from Yorktown to Antietam. I am proud because you who are here are some of the old Army of the Potomac, on which I have looked with pride, and ever shall. (Tremendous cheering). When you return to your comrades say to them that their old commander has continued to watch their every battle with as much interest, feeling and pride as when with you, and that he will ever do so. (Cheers). I am also glad to know that so many of you are returning to the service. I thank you, comrades, for the kind welcome you have given me. I will not say good-bye again. We have said that once before, and I trust never to repeat it."

Early in November, 1863, four or five hundred men remaining, discontent arose and insubordination was manifest. This culminated on the night of the 4th in the burning of the barracks. At about one o'clock of the following morning fire was discovered on the east side of the camp. The alarm was given by the firing of howitzers, and several apparatus companies came



to the scene, Excelsior Bucket Company No. 1, Protection Hose, of Stapleton, and Neptune Hose, of Tompkinsville, being the first to arrive. The flames were extinguished, but not until all the eastern side and about one hundred feet of the northern side of the camp were destroyed. Unusual vigilance was exercised on the following night, but flames again appeared at about the same hour of the night, and before any available assistance could reach the spot the remaining part of the structure was burned to the ground. A few days later a plot was exposed by one of the men implicated in it, which had been planned for the purpose of burning the hospital which was filled with sick men. The man who exposed the plot had not the hardened heart to allow him to carry out the scheme of crime that he had engaged in, and he named the ringleaders, who were arrested and put in irons. On the following day General Canby ordered all the men except about forty cavalry to be removed to Governor's island. The camp was now deserted except by the few men who remained to guard its ruins.

When the encampments of soldiers were first made on the island considerable alarm was felt for the safety of the inhabitants and the security of their property against the molestation of the troops. A police force was talked of and steps toward a regular organization, to be employed and paid by the public funds, were taken. There were differences of opinion, some believing that such a force was necessary and others arguing that it would be a needless expense, and that the camp regulations would be sufficient to protect the people against any serious damage or molestation. A line of sentries was stationed by the commandant of Camp Scott as far as Vanderbilt landing, about two miles from the camp.

Thus, as we have seen, now and heretofore in this article, the most vigilant effort was in many cases made to protect the people from the annoyances of the encamped army. But this could be but imperfectly done. The local and government authorities sometimes came into conflict, when soldiers who had been arrested and imprisoned for offenses against the civil law, were demanded by the officers of the military organizations to which they belonged to move with the organization to the seat of war. In this way many a guilty criminal escaped punishment. This emboldened others to be more reckless in their





offensive conduct, especially when it was known that their regiments were to move forward before a trial in the civil courts would be had.

One of the frequent manifestations of lawlessness was seen in the work of the incendiary torch. The frequency of fires in 1862 is thus referred to in a paragraph in a local paper at the time:

“FIRE NUMBER 26.—Notwithstanding the general desire to efface party lines there is still a party on the North Shore which keeps up its organization and performs its labors with much diligence. We allude to the barnburners. These notable individuals enjoyed themselves for the twenty-sixth time on Sunday morning, at half-past three o'clock (the usual hour for such fun), by setting fire to the barn of Mr. Henry Cornell on the Mill Road, Castleton. It was burned to the ground—loss about \$300. The inhabitants all get awake in time to see the fire, but the incendiaries are generally supposed to be invisible.

“Many of the people are said to be so used to the alarm of fire that when they discover it is not their barn they go to bed again.”

Incendiary fires, burglaries, thefts, assaults, and drunken fights were of daily occurrence during much of the time. The expenses of the county for the services of constables and patrolmen for the year 1862 was eight thousand six hundred and forty-five dollars and twenty-one cents. About two thousand six hundred arrests for criminal offenses were made during the year. The bills of the justices of the peace for acting on these cases amounted to five thousand two hundred and twenty-three dollars and seventy-one cents; making an aggregate of thirteen thousand eight hundred and sixty-eight dollars and ninety-two cents paid for preserving the public peace, which after all was continually in a precarious condition.

The summer of 1865 was notable for the frequency of assaults, robberies and other examples of ruffianism. Many of the perpetrators of outrages of this character upon the peaceable citizens, which occurred almost daily, were returned soldiers, who had been schooled amid scenes of war, and being without any principle of honor, were ready to practice theft and violence upon unprotected citizens in a land of peace. The island was overcome by a tide of ruffianism and crime that rendered life



and property here decidedly unsafe. It was a publicly admitted fact that crime was enormously on the increase. Highway robberies, house breakings, violent assaults and batteries, riots and other heinous offenses, almost without number, were committed. Any attempt to give a detailed list of specific instances would be a sickening task. Many arrests were made and the guilty parties were imprisoned in the county jail. But even here their bold defiance of law manifested itself in threats of using the political influence which some of them claimed to have to defeat at the ballot box the public officials who should dare to bring them to punishment. Despite such threats, however, the grand jury at the next court of sessions, in September, found indictments against thirty-eight prisoners, nineteen of which were for assault and battery, four for burglary, two for assault with intent to kill, and the remainder for various crimes.

But the period of war is closed. Let us be done with the lawlessness, the riots, the contentions, the destruction of property, the ill feelings, the excitements, the sorrowings and all the train of skeleton forms that attend on a time of war. And how mean a recompense is the blare of martial music, the graceful evolutions of military parade, the glitter of dazzling uniforms and equipments or the gallant carriage of a commanding hero on the field! Let us pray kind Heaven that this fair island may not again be desecrated by the presence of an encamped soldiery preparing themselves for scenes of carnage and destruction.

From the scenes in which men were engaged—the scenes in which their aim was to shed the blood of their fellow men, it is refreshing to turn a moment to the scenes in which honorable women were meanwhile engaged—the work of staying the crimson tide, healing the wounds that men had made and relieving the sufferings that were the inevitable fruits of war. While the men were at work fanning the flames of passion to make them burn higher for the destruction of their fellows, the ladies were unobtrusively working away, preparing articles of use and comfort for the soldiers at the front or the sick and wounded in hospitals. Organizations were effected in the different villages, preparing articles of clothing, such as stockings, shirts, drawers, handkerchiefs, mittens, besides lint, bandages, blankets, preserves, and other little delicacies and luxuries. There were the “Mariner’s Harbor Soldiers’ Relief Society,” com-



posed largely of active young ladies, the "Ladies' Relief Society of New Springville," the "North Shore Soldiers' Aid Society at Factoryville," and others whose names or work are not before us now, but which were equally noble, self-sacrificing and worthy of grateful remembrance.

We will, in closing this chapter of war, append the following list of Staten Islanders who served during the War of the Rebellion, in Company I, One Hundred and Fifty-sixth New York State Volunteers:

Orville D. Jewett, Castleton, first lieutenant; captain; resigned 1863.

Clarence T. Barrett, Castleton, second lieutenant; first lieutenant; adjutant; served as aid-de-camp on staff of Major-General W. H. Emory, commanding Nineteenth army corps; then on staff of Major-General E. S. Canby, commanding department of gulf; captain and aid-de-camp, United States army; brevetted major for gallant and meritorious services at the capture of Mobile.

Charles W. Kennedy, Castleton, first sergeant; second lieutenant; first lieutenant; captain; served for two years on staff of Third brigade, Second division, Nineteenth army corps, as brigade commissary, and acting assistant adjutant-general.

Edward Steers, Castleton, sergeant; first lieutenant; served until the end of war.

William Cortelyou, Southfield, sergeant; second lieutenant; wounded at Cedar Creek; served until the end of war.

Bennett H. Buel, Castleton, sergeant; served until the end of war.

George G. Cadmus, Northfield, sergeant; discharged for disability.

Charles T. Pine, Castleton, corporal; discharged to accept commission on corps d'Afrique.

George Mersereau, Castleton, corporal; sergeant; served until the end of war.

Edward Haggerty, Northfield, corporal; killed before Port-Hudson.

Nathan M. Barrett, Castleton, corporal color-guard; served until the end of war.

William C. Simonson, Southfield, corporal; sergeant; served until the end of war.



Oscar Guyon, Southfield, corporal ; sergeant ; served until the end of war.

Albert P. Heal, Castleton, corporal ; served until the end of war.

John Vanderbilt, Castleton, corporal ; discharged to accept appointment as master of arms United States navy.

Thomas Steers, Castleton, corporal ; discharged to accept commission as assistant engineer United States navy.

John G. Bott, Castleton, private ; served until the end of war.

William Bamber, Castleton, private ; corporal ; served until the end of war,

Robert Bell, Southfield, private ; died of disease in service.

Henry V. Buel, Castleton, private ; died of disease in service.

Edmund Blake, Castleton, private ; wounded at Winchester ; served until the end of war ; died from effects of wound.

James Brogan, Castleton, private ; served until end of war.

Nathan F. Barrett, Castleton, private ; sergeant-major ; second lieutenant ; served until end of war.

Abiel H. Burbank, Southfield, private ; died of disease in service.

Ebenezer Chichester, Castleton, private ; served till close of war.

Daniel Collins, Castleton, private ; served till close of war.

Dewitt C. Connor, Southfield, private ; killed in action at Fort Bisland.

Edward Clary, Castleton, private ; wounded at Cedar Creek ; served until end of war.

Patrick Colbert, Castleton, private ; served until end of war.

Thomas F. Donnelly, Castleton, private ; sergeant ; served until end of war.

Richard Dawlin, Castleton, private ; wounded at Fisher's Hill ; discharged.

Albert G. Denton, Castleton, private ; discharged for disability.

Daniel Elms, Northfield, private ; served until end of war.

Jacob N. Guyon, Southfield, private ; corporal ; discharged for disability.

Nelson Gilby, Southfield, private ; served until end of war.

Joseph Jacobs, Castleton, private ; served until end of war.

Bernard Jacobs, Castleton, private ; drum-major ; served until end of war ;





Albert Jones, Castleton, private ; died of disease in service.

James E. Hood, Castleton, private ; discharged for disability.

Ira McVeigh, Castleton, private ; wounded at Cedar Creek ; discharged.

Reuben S. Miller, Castleton, private ; served until end of war.

Philip J. Miller, Southfield, private ; corporal ; served until end of war.

Mark Mallett, Castleton, private ; taken prisoner at Cedar Creek ; discharged.

John Prosi, Castleton, private ; served until end of war.

Edward N. Pomeroy, Castleton, private ; discharged to receive commission in corps d'Afrique.

Augustus W. Sexton, Jr., Castleton, private ; discharged to receive commission.

William B. Smith, Castleton, private ; served until end of war.

Robert Stewart, Castleton, private ; served until end of war.

George Wackerhagen, Castleton, private ; discharged to receive appointment as hospital steward United States army.

Thomas Wright, Castleton, private ; wounded at Montesino Bayou ; served until end of war.

James Watson, Castleton, private ; taken prisoner at Cedar Creek ; died from exposure.

The death of President Garfield occasioned one of the most remarkable and general popular demonstrations of sorrow that has ever been witnessed here. The newspapers of the island were dressed in mourning. Memorial services were held by nearly every church and organization on Monday, October 26, 1881. In the north side villages a parade was organized. This was composed of Washington Engine Company No. 1, Port Richmond Engine Company No. 3, Lincoln Club of New Brighton; New Brighton Engine Company No. 4; Zephyr Hose Company No. 4; Aquehonga Hook and Ladder Company No. 1; Medora Hook and Ladder Company No. 3; Metamora Council No. 650, American Legion of Honor; Continental Council No. 27, O. U. A. M. The line of march was taken along the shore road from the Pavilion hotel at New Brighton to Port Richmond, where a speaker's stand had been erected in the open field on Heberton avenue opposite the school house. Here appropriate services were conducted, consisting of singing and addresses, the latter by Rev. Jesse S. Gilbert and Hon. Erastus Brooks.



Appropriate services were also held at the church of the Ascension, West New Brighton, at 11 o'clock, Rev. Mr. Cornell officiating in the absence of the rector. Services on the previous Sunday at Trinity M. E. church had reference to the subject, and similar services were held at the Moravian church at New Dorp. At the Reformed church memorial exercises were conducted on Monday at 2 o'clock by Rev. Dr. Brownlee, assisted by Rev. Dr. John Robinson and Rev. Mr. Vansant. The Rev. C. A. Frincke at the German Lutheran church, St. John's, conducted memorial services in German at the same hour. High mass was celebrated at St. Mary's, Clifton, by the Rev. John Lewis and the Litany of the Saints, in which is included prayers for all people, governors, rulers and officials, was recited in respect to the occasion, on the same day.

An elaborate service was conducted at St. John's, Clifton, which included the prescribed service, music, and addresses by Rev. Dr. Eccleston, the pastor, and Mr. W. W. MacFarland; while at Christ church, New Brighton, the liturgical and musical services were supplemented by an address by Rev. George D. Johnson, the rector. At the Park Baptist church the pastor, being absent at the time, spoke with reference to the subject on the following Sabbath. At the Seamen's Retreat chapel services were held Monday afternoon and addresses were made by Rev. Drs. Kipp and Rockwell. At the Kingsley M. E. and St. Paul's Memorial churches, Edgewater, services were held on Monday, while on Sunday morning Rev. Dr. Rockwell, of the Presbyterian church, held a commemorative service. Masses were celebrated on Monday in St. Peter's, New Brighton, and St. Rose of Lima, West New Brighton; and in the latter church, after mass, prayer for the authorities, composed by Archbishop Carroll, of Baltimore, was recited. There were also services in St. Paul's M. E. and the South Baptist churches at Tottenville; in St. Joseph's at Rossville, and St. Mark's at Pleasant Plains. Rev. Mr. Cole, of Woodrow, delivered an essay on the life and service of President Garfield on the preceding Sunday, and Rev. Mr. Morris, of Bethel M. E. church, gave a memorial sermon on the following Sabbath.

Nearly all these churches were draped, some on the inside, some on the outside and some on both. Heavy folds and coverings of black cloth were tastefully arranged on pulpits, chairs, tables, organs, railings, around windows, over doorways



and arches and upon supporting pillars. Many residences, hotels and business places were also heavily dressed in mourning, and in some cases bells were tolled at intervals through the day. Services at Stapleton Park were held under the auspices of Robert G. Shaw Post, G. A. R., and a large audience assembled, over which Mr. Justus O. Woods presided. Lenhart Post, of Tottenville, and the Staten Island Quartette Club, represented by thirty-five members, assisted in the exercises, and Ex-Congressman James W. Covert delivered an appropriate and touching address.

Probably the most destructive storm ever known on the island was that of September, 1882. Rain commenced on Wednesday evening the 20th, and continued until Saturday. Heavy rains fell during this time, and created freshets in many places, destroying property and rendering impossible the ordinary avenues of travel. The storm was accompanied by unusually high tides, which added to the aggregate damage along the shores. Willow brook was swelled to an alarming fullness. The culvert in the railroad embankment between Prince's bay and Pleasant Plains was not sufficient to give vent to the great body of water that accumulated above it, and on Saturday evening a breach was made and about thirty feet of the embankment was carried down the stream. The water by this time had risen so high as to cover many gardens and roads, and to fill many cellars, even covering the first floors in some houses. Out-houses and a nameless multitude of small articles were borne away on the seething flood. Blacksmith shops, barns and dwelling-houses were undermined or otherwise damaged, as were also their contents, by the water, and a number of bridges were lifted from their foundations or carried away. Nearly two weeks elapsed before a temporary track could be laid across the breach so as to allow the passing of trains.

The railroad track was also badly damaged in several places in the vicinity of Richmond Valley. At the station the track was bent and torn, and a short distance below another washout occurred, while a train which had reached this point found itself between two impaired spots, so as to be unable to pass with safety either way, in which condition it remained till Sunday afternoon. Several bridges were destroyed in the vicinity of Rossville and Green Ridge, and deep cuts were made in the roads in many places, which made them for the time impassable.



At Tottenville the railroad track and turn-tables were submerged, a brick wall in the rear of John Nelson's hotel was thrown down, and sidewalks and streets were badly disfigured, cellars filled and property destroyed. Near Huguenot the South Side hotel was damaged to the extent of about two thousand dollars value, by the undermining of its foundations, caused by the outburst of Arbutus lake. In Stapleton the streets were flooded, as were a large number of houses. At New Brighton the streets were deluged, and many houses that were considered proof against any ordinary flood were filled with water.

The stone wall that protects the causeway over which the road crosses the meadow at Sailors' Snug Harbor gave way, and the road was flooded so that the platforms of passing horse cars were under water.

At West New Brighton Broadway became a great river, its turbulent waters undermining a carpenter's shop belonging to David Pero, and another shop adjoining, cut out a great hole in the street near by, and flowed into the lower story of police station No. 2, to the depth of nine inches on the floor. The prisoners had to be transferred to the second story and the officers were obliged to sit up all night and watch them. The causeway between West New Brighton and Port Richmond was covered by two feet of water, and the torrent, as it swept over, took with it a cow, two pigs and a great quantity of miscellaneous property. In this part of the island the story of demolished bridges, inundated floors and upturned sidewalks and streets were on every hand too frequent to be particularized.

A very appropriate and commendable demonstration was made by the people of this county on the anniversary of the second centennial of the organization of the county of Richmond. The credit of being the first to suggest such a demonstration here is given to Mr. Robert Moore, then 'supervisor' of Castleton. In accordance with that suggestion the board of supervisors called a meeting of citizens to coöperate with them in perfecting plans for such a celebration.

The first meeting of citizens was held September 22d, 1883, at which Hon. Erastus Brooks was chosen president; Hon. George William Curtis, Louis De Jonge, Erastus Wiman and Dr. Ephraim Clark, vice-presidents; George H. Daley, recording secretary, and Charles Arthur Hollick, corresponding secretary.





At this meeting the subject was fully discussed, and the supervisors were authorized to appoint a committee of four citizens from each town, in conjunction with themselves, to act as a committee of arrangements. This committee was afterward increased to nine from each town, which, together with the supervisors, was to be known as the citizens' committee of fifty. At this meeting, on motion of Dr. Ephraim Clarke, Hon. Erastus Brooks was unanimously chosen to prepare and deliver an historical address. At a subsequent meeting of this committee, Professor Anton G. Methfessel was chosen chairman, and Theodore C. Vermilye, secretary.

A sub-committee of four from each town, in conjunction with the supervisors, was appointed by the chairman, to be known as the executive committee, and to them was referred the whole subject of preparing a plan for the celebration. The executive committee organized, with Frederick White as chairman and Duncan R. Norvell as secretary, and after considerable discussion, a parade was decided upon, and full particulars reported to the committee of fifty.

The executive committee was composed of the following men: George Bechtel, Frederick White, Philip Wolff, A. G. Methfessel, Nathaniel Marsh, Benjamin Brown, C. A. Hart, D. J. Tysen, Abram Crocheron, DeWitt Stafford, Robert Moore, D. R. Norvell, R. B. Whittemore, Read Benedict, Jesse Oakley, B. H. Warford, M. Conklin, P. G. Ullman, J. H. Van Clief, sr., William Ricard; Frederick White, chairman; Duncan R. Norvell, secretary.

Arrangements having been perfected, in accordance therewith the procession formed at Elm Park at 12 o'clock at noon on the 1st of November, 1883. The procession was made up of the following organizations in the order named: mounted police, Kickapoo Indians in a wagon, Fort Hamilton band, marshals, Staten Island Schutzen Corps, chariot containing "Goddess of Liberty," Tottenville Cornet Band and Drum Corps, Battalion Grand Army of the Republic, Shaw Post, Lenhart Post, fifty sons of veterans, disabled veterans on a truck, citizens' association, carriages containing speakers, county officials, Staten Island Quartette Club and citizens, Citizens' Cornet Band of South Amboy, Red Cross Division of Knights of Pythias of South Amboy, Protection Hook and Ladder Company of Perth Amboy, Lincoln Hose Company of Perth Amboy, Totten-



ville Hook and Ladder Company No. 1, Kreischer-ville Drum Corps, one hundred and forty employees of B. Kreischer & Sons, New Dorp Pioneer Corps, Mulligan's Band of New York, one hundred men of One Hundred and Thirteenth regiment, Washington Band, Enterprise Hook and Ladder Company No. 1 of Stapleton, Neptune Engine Company No. 6, Protection Engine Company No. 7, Sixty-ninth Regiment Drum Corps, Excelsior Bucket Company No. 1, Relief Bucket Company, Engine Company No. 8 of Clifton, Columbia Cornet Band of Pleasant Plains, Clifton Hose Company No. 6, Excelsior Drum Corps of Tompkinsville, Ben. Brown Hose No. 3, Eterick's Band of Brooklyn, Engine Company No. 9, Robinson Hose No. 9, Forty-seventh Regiment Drum Corps, Neptune Engine Company No. 1 of West Hoboken, Lincoln Club Band, Niagara Engine No. 5, Neptune Hose No. 1, Olvany's Band, Columbia Hook and Ladder, South Amboy Band, Continental Council No. 27, Order United American Mechanics, the Z. Z. Z. Social Club, Newark Cornet Band, Colored Citizens' Association of Newark, Twelfth Regiment Band, Washington Engine No. 4 of Port Richmond, Osceola Cornet Band of Mariners' Harbor, Aquehonga Hook and Ladder Company No. 1, West Brighton Band, Cataract Engine Company No. 2 of West Brighton, Union Base-ball Clubs of Young Men's Christian Union of West Brighton, Elizabeth Cornet Band, Granite Hook and Ladder Company No. 2, Port Richmond Engine Company No. 3, Medora Hook and Ladder Company No. 3 of West Brighton, Joyce's Band of New York, New Brighton Engine Company No. 4, Friendship Hook and Ladder Company No. 1, Oceanic Hook and Ladder Company No. 1 of Travisville, Linoleum Social Club, In-Seine Club and sixty-seven vehicles representing trades, business, characters and fancies, among which were several four horse turnouts, and one wagon drawn by ten horses. A large number of private wagons followed to bring up the rear. The procession started at 12 o'clock, and proceeded by the Shore road to Finger Board road and then returned to Stapleton Flats, where a large tent had been erected, in which addresses were made and music was given. Invitations had been given to the president, governor, mayors of New York and Brooklyn and General Hancock to participate in the ceremonies, none of whom however found it practicable to attend. By the favor of the secretary of the navy, obtained through



Hon. Perry Belmont, the United States ship "Vandalia," anchored off Stapleton, where she lay during the day, being decorated with flags and fired a salute of twenty-one guns at noon.

For the public exercises of the occasion a large tent had been erected on a portion of Stapleton Flats. The interior was tastefully trimmed with United States flags. At the conclusion of the parade the meeting in the tent was called to order by the secretary, Theodore C. Vermilye. Prayer was offered by the Rev. Dr. Brownlee. Dr. Ephraim Clark was made chairman of the meeting, and addresses were delivered by Hon. Erastus Brooks, Hon. Perry Belmont, Hon. George William Curtis, Hon. A. S. Sullivan, Hon. Henry J. Scudder and Hon. Bradford L. Prince, the exercises closing with prayer by the Rev. Mr. Palmer of Tottenville. In the evening a grand display of fireworks was made at Stapleton, and thus closed the day celebrated to mark the completion of two centuries of the existence of Richmond county.



## CHAPTER VII.

### CIVIL DIVISIONS AND CIVIL OFFICERS.

The County.—The Towns.—The Villages.—Hon. Daniel D. Tompkins.—Hon. Erastus Brooks.—Cornelius A. Hart.

WE have already seen in a previous chapter that the county of Richmond was erected by an act of the colonial legislature, "to divide this province and dependencies into Shires and Counties," which was passed November 1, 1688. The act specified—"The county of Richmond to conteyne all Staten Island, Shutter's Island, and the islands of meadow on the west side thereof."

Under this organization it remained till the colonial government was supplanted by that of the state, when, by the act of the state legislature passed March 7, 1788, for dividing the state into counties, the previous organization was confirmed in the following language, which differs from that in the former act only in orthography:—"The County of Richmond to contain all *Staten Island*, *Shooter's Island* and the Islands of Meadow on the West Side thereof."

The act of March 7, 1788, dividing the counties of this state into towns, gives the division of Richmond as follows:

"And all that Part of the County of *Richmond*, bounded northerly by Kill-Van-Cull, easterly by *Hudson's River*, southerly by the Road leading from *Van Dueren's Ferry* southward of the *Watering-Place* to *Richmond-Town*, and westerly by a Lyne beginning at the Mouth of *Dongan's Mill-creek*, and running from thence along the Line of the Manor of *Castle-Town* to the Road at the Rear of the Patent of *Corsen and Company*, thence along the northerly Side of the said Road westerly to the Road leading to *Haughwoul's Mill*, and then southerly along the westerly Side of the last mentioned Road as it runs along by *Richard Conner's*, to the Tavern called the *Rose and Crown*, on the said Road leading to Rich-





mond-Town, shall be and hereby is erected into a Town by the Name of *Castle-Town*.

“And that all that Part of the said County of Richmond, bounded northerly by the North Side of said Road leading from *Van Duerson's Ferry* to *Richmond-Town* and the *Fresh-Kill*, easterly by *Hudson's-River*, southerly by the *Bay*, and westerly by a Line beginning on the *Fresh-Kill* at the North-west Corner of the Land and Meadow late of *James Egberts*, and running from thence southerly along the same to *Egberts' Lane*, and then along the same Lane to the Road called the New Road and then along the same New Road westerly to the Land of *Henry Perine*, and then southerly along his easterly Bounds to the *Bay* shall be, and hereby is erected into a Town by the Name of *Southfield*.

“And that all that Part of the said County of Richmond, bounded northerly by the *Fresh-Kill*, easterly by *Southfield*, southerly by the *Bay*, and westerly by the Sound, shall be, and hereby is erected into a Town by the Name of *Westfield*.

“And that all the Residue of the said County of *Richmond*, shall be, and hereby is erected into a Town by the Name of *Northfield*.”

The following men from this county have been members of important state and national representative bodies as indicated:

*Members of the Provincial Congress*:—Adrian Bancker, 2d Prov. Cong., 1775-76; Richard Conner, 1st and 3d Prov. Cong., 1775-76; Aaron Cortelyou, 1st and 3d Prov. Cong., 1775-76; John Journeay, 1st and 3d Prov. Cong., 1775-76; Richard Lawrence, 1st and 2d Prov. Cong., 1775-76; Paul Micheau, 1st and 3d Prov. Cong., 1775-76.

*Representatives in Congress*: Daniel D. Tompkins, 9th Congress, 1805-06; Henry Crocheron, 14th Congress, 1815-17; James Guyon, Jr., 16th Congress, 1819-21; Jacob Crocheron, 21st Congress, 1829-31; Samuel Barton, 24th Congress, 1833-37; Joseph Egbert, 27th Congress, 1841-43; Henry I. Seaman, 29th Congress, 1843-47; Obadiah Bowne, 32d Congress, 1851-53; Henry G. Stebbins, 38th Congress, resigned; Dwight Townsend, 38th Congress, 1863-65; Henry B. Metcalfe, 44th Congress, 1875-77.

*Presidential Electors*:—1808, John Garretson; 1812, Joseph Perine; 1836, Jacob Crocheron; 1840, John T. Harrison; 1844,



John C. Thompson ; 1848, James M. Cross ; 1856, Minthorne Tompkins ; 1864, Obadiah Bowne.

*State Senators* :—Paul Micheau, 1789-92 ; Jacob Tysen, 1828 ; Harman B. Cropsey, 1832-35 ; Minthorne Tompkins, 1840-41 ; James E. Cooley, 1852-53 ; Robert Christie, Jr., 1864-65 ; Nicholas La Bau, 1866-67 ; Samuel H. Frost, 1870-71.

*Members of the State Constitutional Conventions* :—Convention of 1788, Abraham Bancker, Gozen Ryerss ; 1801, Joseph Perine ; 1821, Daniel D. Tompkins ; 1845, John T. Harrison ; 1868, George Wm. Curtis.

*Regents of the University* :—Abraham Bancker, John C. Dongan, first board, 1784 ; Harmanus Garrison, second board, 1784 ; after which time the county was not represented in the board until April 12th, 1864, when George Wm. Curtis was appointed, and still continues in office (1886).

The following men have served the county in the offices specified during the years indicated :

*Judges of the County Courts* :—1691, Ellis Duxbury ; 1710, Daniel Lake ; 1711, Joseph Billop ; 1712, Thomas Farmar ; 1739, Richard Merrill ; 1739, John Le Conte ; 1756, William Walton (He was also a member of the council from 1758 to 1768, when he died) ; 1761, Joseph Bedell ; 1775, Benjamin Seaman ; 1786, Paul Micheau ; 1797, Gozen Ryerss ; 1802, John J. Murray ; 1803, John Garretson ; 1823, Jacob Tysen ; 1840, Henry B. Metcalfe ; 1841, William Emerson ; 1844, Albert Ward ; 1847, Henry B. Metcalfe ; 1876, Tompkins Westervelt ; 1882, Stephen D. Stephens, Jr.

*District Attorneys*\* :—1818, George Metcalfe ; 1826, Henry B. Metcalfe ; 1833, Thorn S. Kingsland ; 1839, George Catlin ; 1840, Roderick N. Morrison ; 1841, Lot C. Clark ; 1849, George Catlin ; 1850, George White ; 1853, Alfred DeGroot ; 1860, Abraham W. Winant ; 1865, John H. Hedley ; 1872, Sidney F. Rawson ; 1875, John Croak ; 1881, John Gallagher.

*Surrogates, under Colonial Government* : 1733, Walter Dongan ; 1759, Benjamin Seaman.

*Under Federal Government* :—1787, Adrian Bancker ; 1792, Abraham Bancker ; 1809, John Housman ; 1810, Cornelius Bedell ; 1811, Jonathan Lewis ; 1813, Cornelius Bedell ; 1815, Tunis Egbert ; 1820, Richard Conner ; 1820, John Garrison ; 1821, Tunis Egbert ; 1830, Richard Crocheron ; 1843, Lewis R. Marsh ;

\*This was made a county office in 1818.



1847, Henry B. Metcalfe; 1876, Tompkins Westervelt; 1882, Stephen D. Stephens, Jr.

*County Clerks:*—1682, Francis Williamson; 1684, Samuel Winder; 1689, Jacob Corbet; 1691, Thomas Carhart; 1698, Thomas Coen; 1706, William Tillyer; 1708, Alexander Stuart; 1728, Adam Mott; 1738, Daniel Stilwell; 1739, Daniel Corsen; 1761, Paul Micheau; 1781, Abraham Bancker; 1784, John Mersereau; 1798, Joseph Perine; 1810, John V. D. Jacobsen; 1811, Joseph Perine; 1815, Jonathan Lewis; 1828, Walter Betts; 1843, Joshua Mersereau, Jr.; 1852, Israel C. Denyse; 1855, James Cubberly; 1858, Israel C. Denyse; 1861, Abraham V. Connor; 1864, Michael P. O'Brien; —, Joseph Egbert; 1869, John H. Van Clief, Jr.; 1873, David H. Cortelyou; 1876, Abraham V. Conner; 1879, Cornelius A. Hart.

*School Superintendents, etc.:*—Harman B. Cropsey, county superintendent, appointed 1843. David A. Edgar, Henry M. Boehm, Isaac Lea, James Brownlee, county commissioners, elected.

*Sheriffs:*—1663, John Palmer; 1684, Thomas Lovelace; 1685, Thomas Stilwell; 1689, Eli Crossen; 1691, Thomas Stilwell; 1692, John Stilwell; 1698, John De Pue; 1699, Jacob Coulsen; 1700, Christian Corsen; 1701, John De Pue; 1702, Lambert Garrison; 1709, William Tillyer; 1722, Benjamin Bill; 1730, Charles Garrison; 1736, Paul Micheau; 1739, Nicholas Larzalere; 1751, John Hillyer; 1775, Thomas Frost; 1784, Abraham Bancker; 1788, Lewis Ryerss; 1792, Benjamin Parker; 1796, Isaac Cubberly; 1799, John Hillyer; 1802, Jacob Crocheron; 1806, Jonathan Lewis; 1810, Daniel Guyon; 1811, Jacob Crocheron; 1813, Jacob Hillyer; 1815, Henry Perine; 1819, John Hillyer; 1821, Jacob Crocheron; 1825, Walter Betts; 1828, Harman B. Cropsey; 1831, Lawrence Hillyer; 1834, Israel Oakley; 1837, Andrew B. Decker; 1840, Jacob Simonson; 1843, Israel O. Dissosway; 1846, Jacob G. Guyon; 1849, Israel O. Dissosway; 1852, Abraham Ellis; 1855, Abraham Lockman; 1858, Isaac M. Marsh; 1861, Moses Alston; 1864, Abraham Winant; 1867, Jacob G. Winant; 1870, Moses Alston; 1873, William C. Denyse; 1876, Benjamin Brown; 1880, Abraham V. Conner; 1883, Benjamin Brown; 1886, John J. Vaughn, Jr.

*Members of the Colonial Assembly:*—John Dally, 1691; Lambert Dorland, 1691; Ellis Duxbury, 1691-95-98; Thomas Morgan, 1692-98-1702; J. T. Van Pelt, 1692-97-98; John Shadwell,



1693-95; Thomas Stilwell, 1693-98; John Tanison, 1694-95-98; John Woglom, 1698-99; Garret Veghte, 1699, 1702; John Stilwell, 1702,-25; Abraham Lakerman, 1702-26; Richard Merrill, 1725-37; John Le Count, 1726-56; Adam Mott, 1737-39; Richard Stilwell, 1739-48; Paul Micheau, 1748-51; William T. Walton, 1751-61; Benjamin Seaman, 1756-75; Henry Holland, 1761-69; Christopher Billop, 1769-75.

*Members of Assembly for Richmond County, under the State Government:*—Abraham Jones, 1777-78; Joshua Mersereau, 1777-78; no name recorded, 1778-79, Joshua Mersereau, 1779-80, 1780-81, 1781-82, 1782-83; Adrian Bancker, 1784; Johannes Van Wagenen, 1784; Joshua Mersereau, 1784-85; Cornelius Corsen, 1784-85; Joshua Mersereau, 1786; John Dongan, 1786; John C. Dongan, 1787; Thomas Frost, 1787; John C. Dongan, 1788; Peter Winant, 1788; Abraham Bancker, 1788-89; John C. Dongan, 1788-89; Abraham Bancker, 1789-90; Peter Winant, 1789-90; Peter Winant, 1791; Gozen Ryerss, 1791, 1792, 1793, 1794; Lewis Ryerss, 1795, 1796, 1797; Paul J. Micheau, 1798, 1799; John P. Ryerss, 1800; Paul J. Micheau, 1800-01, 1802, 1803; John Housman, 1804; John Dunn, 1804-05, 1806; David Mersereau, 1807, 1808, 1808-09; Richard Conner, 1810; James Guyon, 1811, 1812; James Guyon, Jr., 1812-13, 1814; Jesse Oakley, 1814-15; Richard Corsen, 1816; Richard C. Corsen, 1816-17, 1818; Harmanus Guyon, 1819, 1820; Samuel Barton, 1820-21, 1822; Isaac R. Housman, 1823; Henry Perine, 1824; Harmanus Garrison, 1825; no election, 1826; Abraham Cole, 1827, 1828; John Vanderbilt, 1829; John T. Harrison, 1830, 1831; Jacob Mersereau, 1832, 1833; Paul Mersereau, 1834; Lawrence Hillyer, 1835; John Garrison, Jr., 1836; Lawrence Hillyer, 1837; Israel Oakley, 1838, 1839; Bornet P. Winant, 1840; Israel Oakley, 1841; Henry Cole, 1842, 1843; William Nickles, 1844; Peter Mersereau, 1845; George H. Cole, 1846, 1847; Ephraim J. Totten, 1848; Gabriel P. Disosway, 1849; Benjamin P. Prall, 1850; William H. Anthon, 1851; Lawrence H. Cortelyou, 1852; Henry De Hart, 1853; Nicholas Crocheron, 1854; John F. Raymond, 1855; William J. Shea, 1856; Joshua Mersereau, 1857; Eben W. Hubbard, 1858; Robert Christie, Jr., 1859; Theodore C. Vermilye, 1860; N. Dane Ellingwood, 1861; Smith Ely, 1862; Theodore Frean, 1863; William H. Rutan, 1864; James Ridgway, 1865; Thomas Child, 1866; Nathaniel J. Wyeth, 1867; John Decker, 1868-71; David W. Judd, 1872;





John B. Hillyer, 1873; Stephen D. Stephens, Jr., 1874-75; Kneeland Townsend, 1876; Samuel R. Brick, 1877; Erastus Brooks, 1878, 1879, 1881, 1882, 1883; Oliver Fiske, 1880; Edward A. Moore, 1884; Michael S. Tynan, 1885; Edward P. Doyle, 1886; Edward A. Moore, 1887.

Supervisors of the several towns in Richmond county since the beginning of the year 1766, alphabetically arranged:

*Castleton:* Barnes, George, 1792-93; Barrett, Nathan, 1837-38; Burbank, Abraham, 1794-98; Cary, Richard S., 1804; Christopher, Richard, 1846, 1849, 1857-8-9, 1868-9, 1874-5-6; Clute, John J., 1860; Conner, Richard, 1766-84, 1786-92; Crabtree, James II., 1865; Crocheron, Abraham, 1832-3; Davis, George B., 1853; De Groot, Jacob, 1839; Dongan, John C., 1785; Ely, Smith, 1861-2; Esterbrook, Joseph, 1866; Gardiner, David L., 1864; Garrison, John, 1803; Garrison, John, Jr., 1834-5-6; Hazard, Robert M., 1847-8; Heal, Nathan M., 1867; Herpeck, Charles A., 1877; Housman, John, 1799 to 1802, 1810; Housman, Isaac R., 1822-31; Laforge, Peter D., 1841-2; Martling, Joseph B. H., 1850-52; Martino, Gabriel, 1855; Mersereau, Joshua, 1854; Minturn, Robert B., 1871; Pell, D. Archie, 1870; Thompson, John C., 1840; Tysen, Jacob, 1811-21; Tysen, John, Jr., 1805-09; Vermeule, John D., 1872-3; Vreeland, Eder, 1844-5; Ward, Albert, 1843.

*Northfield:*—Bedell, Cornelius, 1790, 1794; Burger, James G., 1855; Child, Thomas, 1863; Corsen, Cornelius, 1779-84; Crocheron, Henry, 1800-04, 1808-14; Crocheron, Nicholas, 1805-7, 1825-30, 1846-7; Crocheron, Richard, 1816-23; Denyse, Israel C., 1866-7; Hillyer, John, 1767; Hillyer, John B., 1872; Hillyer, John, Jr., 1772-3; Hillyer, Lawrence, 1851, 1856; Laforge, Peter C., 1862; Lake, Daniel, 1795-97; Latourette, Henry, 1767; Latourette, Richard, 1876-77; Martin, Oliver R., 1848; Mersereau, David, 1815; Mersereau, Jacob, 1792-3, 1799; Mersereau, John, 1788; Mersereau, Peter, 1841-44; Moore, Richard C., 1854; Perine, James, 1831-32; Post, Garret G., 1850, 1857-61; Prall, William, 1824; Ryerss, Gozen, 1785-87; Simonson, Bornt, 1774-78; Simonson, Garret, 1873-76; Simonson, Jacob, 1833-40, 1849; Tysen, John, 1789, 1791, 1798; Wright, Garret P., 1852; Van Clief, John H., 1868-71; Van Name, Charles, 1853, 1864; Van Name, Michael, 1845.

*Southfield:*—Barnes, George, 1789, 1800; Barton, Edward P., 1869; Barton, Samuel, 1852, 1857; Brady, Philip, 1870; Britton,



Alexander H., 1844; Clark, Ephraim, 1866-67; Cocroft, James, 1865; Coddington, Samuel, 1841-43, 1857; Cole, George H., 1845; Corry, William, 1876, 1877; Cortelyou, Peter, 1789-98; Egbert, Joseph, 1855-56; Fountain, Anthony, 1767, 1769, 1784; Garrison, John C., 1849, 1858-60; Greenfield, George J., 1872 to —; Guyon, Harmanus, 1816-20, 1822-33; Guyon, James, 1782-3, 1785-6; Guyon, James, 1838-40, 1847-8, 1850-51; Hall, Farnham, 1846; Jacobson, Christian, 1772-81; Jacobson, John V. D., 1802-15; Johnson, Anthony, 1834-36; Keeley, Dennis, 1861-64, 1871; Ketteltas, J. S., 1868; Mersereau, Jacob W., 1853-4; Perine, Henry, 1821; Poillon, John, 1766, 1768; Tysen, John, 1795-98.

*Westfield*:—Bancker, Adrian, 1772-73; Cole, Cornelius, 1788, 1794; Cole, Gilbert A., 1857, 1862; Cropsey, Jacob R. 1844-45; Depuy, Nicholas, 1766 to 1769; Eddy, Andrew, 1846; Ellis, George W., 1870-71; Frost, Samuel H., 1851 to 1856; Guyon, Jacob, M., 1876; Jackson, Richard, 1828; Larzelere, Benjamin, 1789, 1795 to 1801; Latourette, David, 1835-36; Mersereau, Daniel, 1829-33; Micheau, Paul, 1790-93; Oakley, Israel, 1840; Oakley, Jesse, 1850; Perine, Henry, 1774-83; Rutan, William H., 1858-61; Seguire, Henry H., 1874, 1877; Seguire, Joseph, 1826, 1837-39; Tstten, Ephraim J., 1847, 1849; Totten, Gilbert, 1802-25, 1827; Totten, John, 1784, 1809-25, 1827; Winant, Peter, 1785-87; Winant, Bornt P., 1834, 1841-43, 1848; Wood, Abraham H., 1864-65; Wood, Abraham J., 1866-69, 1872-73.

*Middletown*:—Armstrong, John E., 1873; Bechtel, John, 1864; Bradley, Alvin C., 1872; Brick, Samuel R., 1868-71; Davis, George B., 1861; Frean, Theodore, 1866, 1877; Frost, Henry, 1876; Hornby, Alexander, 1862; Lord, D. Porter, 1865, 1867; White, Frederick, 1874; Wood, Jacob B., 1860.

N. B. There is no record of supervisors' names earlier than 1766, except in a few instances noticed below. The names of the supervisors of 1770 and 1771 are not recorded. It is possible that the names of some of the earliest supervisors are arranged under the wrong town, as in no case are the names of the towns and supervisors connected.

*Supervisors prior to 1766*:—1699—William Tiljeu, North; Anthony Tyson, West; Abm. Lakeman, South. 1703—Richard Merrill, North; Stoffel Garrison, South; Anthony Tysen, West. 1704— — Merrill, North; Tunis Egbert, West. 1705—Aron Prail, North; Tunis Egbert, West; Stoffel Van Sant, South. 1706—Tunis Egbert, West; Aaron Prall, North. 1709—Alex-



ander Stuart, South; Jacob Corsen. North; Tunis Egbert, West.

The earliest record of a town election in Castleton now to be found is that dated 1781. At that election the following officers were chosen: Richard Conner, supervisor; Peter Housman, clerk; James Lisk, constable and collector; Peter Housman and George Barnes, assessors; Peter Housman and Daniel Corsen, commissioners of roads, and other officers.

The following list, dated December 22, 1783, in Castleton, contains the "Names of the persons that swore to the State of New York." Hendrick Garrison, John Wandel, John C. Dongan, John Dorsett, Matthew Decker, Tunis Egberts, Nathaniel Britten, Abraham Egberts, Joseph Barton, Daniel Corsen, Joseph Christopher, Abraham Housman, Matthias Smith, John Housman, Thomas Kingston, Edward Blake, Samuel Van Pelt, James Johnston, John Lisk, John Bodine, Nicholas Bush, William Van Pelt, Edward Egberts and George Barns.

The town of Middletown was erected by an act of the state legislature passed April 16th, 1860. It was formed from parts of Southfield and Castleton, the new town being bounded by a line "commencing on the bay or shore on the east side of Staten Island at the point where the Richmond turnpike strikes said bay; thence running westerly along said Richmond turnpike road to the town of Northfield; thence southerly on the line between the towns of Northfield and Castleton to where said line terminates at Southfield; thence northeasterly on the line between Castleton and Southfield, along the Richmond plank-road to Vanderbilt avenue; thence easterly along the southerly side of said Vanderbilt avenue to the bay of New York; thence northerly along the shore or bay of New York to the point of beginning." These bounds included the eastern portion of Southfield and the southerly portion of Castleton. The first town meeting of the new town was held at Nautilus hall, on the second day of May following, and the act appointed Thomas Standerwick, Thomas Garrett and Cary Devery to preside at that meeting.

The village of Edgewater, comprising part of Tompkinsville, and all of Stapleton and Clifton, was originally incorporated in 1866, being then divided into nine wards, but some legal defect having been detected, a new charter was obtained the following



year. The names of the first trustees, under the new charter, and the wards they represented were as follows : William C. Denyse, 1st ; David Burgher, 2d ; George Bechtel, 3d ; Theodore Frean, 4th ; Dr. Thomas C. Moffat, 5th ; James R. Robinson, 6th ; Alfred Wandell, 7th ; Dennis Keeley, 8th ; J. Duigan, 9th. The officers then were : Theodore Frean, president ; Henry F. Standerwick, clerk ; Thomas Garrett, police justice.

The experiment of village government was not as successful as might be desired, and many were in favor of returning to the former status under the town. The village charter was, however, amended by acts of legislature in 1870, 1872, 1873, 1874, 1875, 1877 and 1884. Under the charter of 1875 the village was divided into only two wards, with one trustee each, and a third trustee at large, who was to be president of the village corporation. Under this charter the first ward trustees were Benjamin Brown and Mr. Fellowes ; and William Corry, president. Henry F. Standerwick was elected clerk. By the charter of 1884 the village was divided into five wards, and the number of trustees was correspondingly increased. The boundaries given in that charter are as follows :

“Commencing at a point on the shore of the bay of New York, where the center line of Arietta street, if prolonged, would intersect the shore of said bay, and running thence along said center line of Arietta street, southwesterly to the center line of the Richmond Turnpike ; thence along the said center line of the Richmond turnpike, southwesterly to the southwesterly side of the Clove road ; thence along the southwesterly side of the Clove road southeasterly to the Richmond road ; thence along the easterly line of the Richmond road, southerly to the northerly line of the Old Town road ; thence along the northerly line of the Old Town road six hundred feet ; and thence on a line parallel to and at a distance of six hundred feet from the easterly side of the Richmond road, and continuing thence on a line parallel to and at a distance of six hundred feet southerly from the southerly line of the Fingerboard road, and westerly line of Sand lane to where said line intersects the Old Town road ; thence in a due southeasterly line to the lower bay of New York ; and thence along the lower and upper bay of New York, northeasterly and northerly to the place of beginning.”

The village of New Brighton was incorporated by act of the





legislature, April 26, 1866, and embraced the northerly half of the town of Castleton. It was about two and a half miles long in a straight line, and about one mile in width. This territory was divided into four wards, and the trustees appointed by the same act to carry its provisions into effect were: Augustus Prentice, first ward; James W. Simonson, second ward; Francis G. Shaw, third ward; and William H. J. Bodine, fourth ward. The portion of the town remaining unincorporated was very sparsely populated, but was obliged, nevertheless, to have a full corps of town officers, some of whom resided within the village, and exercised the offices without, as well as within, and the duties of some, such as the commissioners of highways, which office had been abolished within the village, could be performed only in the unincorporated remnant of the town. The bills rendered by these officers for their services at the end of each year were so large, that the taxes outside of the village were greater than those within. The only method the people could resort to for ridding themselves of this burden, was to seek admission into the corporation, which they did, and in 1872 the remainder of the town was added to the village, and divided into two wards, the fifth and sixth. The dimensions of the village now are, about four miles long and two miles wide. In 1871, a large and elegant village hall was erected on Lafayette avenue, corner of Second street, at a cost of about thirty-six thousand dollars, including the land.

The first village election was held May 22, 1866, for the election of a police justice. One of the first ordinances of the village trustees, on the 12th of May, "ordained" that a public pound be established on the premises of Edward Roe on the Mill road, and the said Roe was appointed pound master. The expenses of the village incorporation for the first year, to June 1, 1867, were twenty-two thousand three hundred and twenty-six dollars and forty-two cents. The charter was amended by acts of the legislature in 1867, 1871, 1872, 1873 and 1875. Its limits are now identical with those of the former town of Castleton. The office of village president has been held by the following: Augustus Prentice, 1866; John Laforge, 1867-69; Anson Livingston, 1870; George M. Usher, 1871; M. J. Fowler, 1872; D. A. Pell, 1873; William Chorlton, 1874; R. B. Whittemore, 1875-76; William H. J. Bodine, 1877; Harry L. Horton, 1878-79; David J. H. Willecox, 1880-84; John J. Featherston,



1885. The village clerks have been: Mark Cox, 1866-69; George Bowman, 1870; C. T. McCarthy, 1871-78; James C. Hill, 1879-81; John J. Kenney, 1882-85.

The village of Port Richmond was incorporated by act of April 24, 1866, but by reason of the unconstitutionality of the act, which appointed trustees for the village, no organization was effected until after the passage of an amendment on April 25, 1867. Pursuant to this last act an election was held May 11, 1867, and Nicholas Van Pelt, George W. Jewett, William A. Ross, Garret P. Wright, James B. Pollock, and Henry Miller, Jr., were elected trustees. The boundaries of the village given in the charter are as follows:

“Northerly, by the river Kill Von Kull; easterly, by the line between Castleton and Northfield; southerly, beginning on a point at the bridge about three hundred feet southerly from the German Lutheran church and running thence westerly to the southerly side of the residence of Jacob Hatfield; thence westerly to a monument on the southwest corner of the Richmond granite quarry at the Morning Star road; thence running a westerly course to the southernmost line of the property of the Methodist Episcopal church on the new road at Mariner’s Harbor; thence following the center of the road a northerly course to the river Kill Von Kull; thence following the river to the place of beginning.”

Captain Nicholas Van Pelt occupied the position of president of the board of trustees continuously from the first till his death in December, 1881, when he was followed by Captain Garret P. Wright who has held the office till the present time (1885). Frederick Groshon, the first village clerk, held that office till his death, March 12, 1872, when he was succeeded by De Witt Stafford, who continues in the office. James B. Pollock has been treasurer from the beginning to the present time.

At the time of the organization of the village there was only about five hundred feet of sidewalk, mostly of brick, in the whole village. Improvement of the streets has since been steadily carried forward, including the widening of Shore road, Richmond and Jewett avenues, and other roads of less importance, until now every street of any considerable note is not only flagged, curbed and guttered, but thoroughly macadamized. In 1884 the village was supplied with water by contract with the Staten Island Water Company. Gas had



been introduced previous to the organization of the village, though the corporation does not yet light the streets. A public park is owned by the village, through a gift of Messrs. Peter N. and Eder V. Haughwout who dedicated this spot for that purpose. These gentlemen, in 1836, purchased the farm of Judge David Mersereau, which lay between Richmond avenue on the west and Cottage place on the east, and the kills on the north and what is now Bond street on the south. Upon this they laid out what has since become the principal part of the village.



THE JACQUES GUION HOUSE,  
NEW DORP.

The territory now in the village limits lying east of the tract just described and on the south of it as far west as Church road belonged to the John Simonson farm and was a part of the original patent to Cornelius Corsen. Cornelius Sebring owned a considerable tract lying on the west side of Richmond avenue (originally called Church road), as far west as to take in the lots facing on the west side of Mechanics' avenue, now called Lafayette avenue. A large tract on both sides of Morning Star road, and on which are situated the granite quarries, was formerly owned by Vincent Fountain, and was purchased by one David Sand, by whom it was laid out into lots, and it now constitutes the thriving middle and southerly portion of the village, a part of it being known as Elm Park. The Haughwout tract before referred to may be more definitely described as being bounded on the north by the kills, west by



Richmond avenue, south by the south line of Bond street and a continuation of that line westward to Richmond avenue, and east by a line about twelve feet east of the east side of Cottage place, and a continuation of the same line north to the kills. This was part of a tract which was granted by Governor Andros to Cornelius Corsen, Andrews Urianson, Derrick Corneliusen and John Peterson, December 30, 1680. That grant extended from Palmer's run and the mill pond, eighty-eight rods along the shore of the kills to the little creek between the store of Johnson and the Speer shipyard, and comprehended 320 acres.

Other village incorporations have been attempted, but their existence has been of short duration. In 1823 the legislature passed an act incorporating the village of Richmond, but the organization was not consummated. Tottenville was incorporated by an act of April 28, 1869, which was amended April 14, 1871. This charter also became inoperative through the failure of the people to approve its conditions.

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HON. DANIEL D. TOMPKINS, governor of the state of New York and vice-president of the United States, whose later years were spent on Staten Island, and after whom the village of Tompkinsville is named, was born at Scarsdale, Westchester county, N. Y., June 21, 1774. The son of Christian parents he was brought up in the Protestant faith. His delicate constitution and aptness to learn induced his father to place him at the grammar school of Malcom Campbell in New York, September, 1787; whence, at the end of a year, he was removed to the academy in North Salem. Here he continued till 1792, when he entered the sophomore class in Columbia College. During the last year of his college course he served in the law office of Peter Jay Monroe, Esq., and two years after graduating at the head of his class in 1795, he was admitted an attorney of the supreme court and subsequently a counsellor. He early interested himself in politics. He became a staunch republican, and in the party struggles of 1799, 1800 and 1801 he took a prominent and conspicuous part. His influence in the city of New York, especially in the Seventh ward, in which he had married Miss Hannah Minthorne, daughter of the wealthy and respectable alderman of that name, was early felt, and to him in a great measure was due the election of Thomas Jefferson to the







*Daniel D. Compton*



presidency. In 1801 he was elected a representative of the city for the purpose of revising the constitution of the state and the following year he became a member of the state legislature. Shortly after he was appointed by Judge Morgan Lewis one of the supreme judges of New York. In 1806 he might have succeeded John S. Hobert to the district judgeship of the United States for the district of New York, but he declined, continuing to serve as a supreme judge till the spring of 1807, when he became, in his thirty-second year, the rival candidate of Governor Lewis for the chief magistracy of the state.

He was elected to the gubernatorial chair by an immense majority, being inducted into office on the day on which intelligence was received of the British attack upon the American frigate "Chesapeake." The order of the president of the United States calling upon the governors to organize their respective quotas of militia also arrived at the State Capitol on the same day, and Governor Tompkins immediately set about the task of defending his native state. In 1808 the president appointed him to the command of all the regular and militia forces on the frontier of New York. His instructions to the militia on this occasion evinced his energy and promptitude of character and received the marked approbation of General Wilkinson, then commander-in-chief of the army.

In 1812 Governor Tompkins, for the first time in the history of the state, prorogued the legislature. Through the favorable reception of a number of petitions of banking companies for incorporation a system had been projected which threatened irreparable evils to the community. This had been aided and promoted by corruption and bribery, and the emphatic action of the governor was taken as a last resort. The step excited unusual animadversion, which extended even so far as to threaten his personal safety, but he was sustained throughout by the knowledge of having done his duty, and the fact that he was supported by the more honorable portion of the republican party.

In June, 1812, President James Madison declared war with Great Britain, and Governor Tompkins stood forth boldly as the fearless champion of the rights and liberties of the American people. A numerous and powerful party of disaffected citizens had shown itself in the Eastern states, formed with a view to paralyze the energies and cripple the resources of the United



States; and it became the avowed object of many persons of high consideration in that section of the Union to make a separate peace with the enemy of the republic and of United America. To make this project effectual it was necessary to gain New York state. The bold stand taken by Governor Tompkins in the proroguing of the legislature had raised for him many enemies among republicans, and a majority of federal members had been elected to the state legislature and to congress. In spite, however, of the opposition which howled against him, he was again elected to the governorship. His situation at that time was well calculated to dismay the stoutest heart. Amidst the disaffection in the East, the opposition of one branch of the legislature, and the northern frontier harassed by the enemy from Champlain to Presqu' isle, and threatening the capital of the state in the south, unaided by the constituted authorities appointed to share with him in the government of the state, the governor had alone to sustain the arduous, embarrassing and responsible duty of defense. But he rose superior to circumstances, and by the firm, unshaken energy of his conduct he silenced or rendered inefficient the opposition of his own state. When the treasury was in an impoverished condition, money scarce and much wanted to carry on the war, he raised funds on his own responsibility and made himself liable beyond his means. He gave great attention to the defenses and intrenchments in and around New York city and harbor, at which the citizens turned out and worked *en masse*. The vast preparation for an expected attack, the pouring in of militia, volunteers and regular troops were always accompanied by the pleasant, cheering and animated presence of Governor Tompkins.

In 1813-14, upon his own responsibility, while the legislature was still in session, he issued orders for organizing a brigade of volunteers, to the command of which he appointed Gen. Peter B. Porter. This contingent saved the remnant of the gallant army of Niagara at the memorable sortie from Fort Erie. He also called into the field a large body of militia, and organized a corps of sea-fencibles, without waiting the slow action of the legislature. In this important measure he received the cordial support and co-operation of the gallant Decatur, who commanded the naval force of the United States on that station, as also the promised sanction and support of Hon. Rufus King. About this time the enemy's ships, commanded by Admiral



Cockburn, which had appeared off Sandy Hook for some time, suddenly disappeared.

Soon after intelligence was received of the capture of the city of Washington, and of the intended movement of the enemy toward Baltimore. Decatur resolved at once to push forward with his sea-fencibles to the assistance of that city, and Governor Tompkins, to give spirit to the enterprise, promptly offered to accompany him as far as New Brunswick, when the news of the enemy being vanquished and their retreat from Baltimore arrived just in time to prevent the march. In October, 1814, Governor Tompkins was appointed to the command of the Third military district, which comprehended one of the most valuable portions of the United States, and included the largest and most heterogeneous military force that ever before fell to the command of an American general. He had also the offer of being secretary of state in the cabinet of the president, but this he declined, thinking his services more useful in the situation in which he was placed.

In 1814 the general government was desirous of fitting out an expedition to dislodge the enemy from Castine. They applied to the governor of Massachusetts for aid, which was refused. In this dilemma the situation of the government was hinted to Governor Tompkins, who raised, on his own responsibility, three hundred thousand dollars, which he forthwith subjected to the orders of General Dearborn. Shortly afterward the war between Great Britain and the United States was brought to a successful termination, and the governor returned to the peaceful duties of the chief magistracy. In the last term of his gubernatorial career, at the approaching election, he was proposed as a suitable person for president of the United States, which however, was waived by him and his friends in consideration of his being a junior in age to James Monroe, whose revolutionary services entitled him to superior claims; he was accordingly nominated and elected vice-president.

On the expiration of his term as vice-president he retired to private life, spending the greater part of his time in the improvement of his farm in Richmond county. Here his spacious and hospitable mansion became one of the homes of literature, philanthropy and art. To its ever open doors flocked men of letters, artists, lawyers, statesmen, patriots and soldiers, people of all nationalities and of all beliefs. At Staten Island he re-





ceived the illustrious victor, General Jackson, also President Monroe and the beloved La Fayette after his landing at quarantine on his second visit to the United States.

The last public service of Governor Tompkins was as a delegate from Richmond county to the state convention to alter the constitution in 1821, of which he became president. In June, 1825, in the 51st year of his age, he died. His mortal remains, on the 13th of June, 1825, were conveyed in the steamboat "Nautilus," to the city of New York, and at Whitehall, the place of landing, were met by a vast concourse of citizens, who accompanied them to their last resting place in the family vault of his wife's father, Alderman Minthorne, in St. Mark's churchyard. Eighteen years after his burial, on the 21st day of June, 1843, his birthday was celebrated at the village of Tompkinsville, Staten Island. An address was delivered and troops from various parts of the country took part in the celebration.

Such was the man whose patriotism, talents, integrity and distinguished services to his country in trial and difficulty, both in peace and in war, we record, as a just tribute to his memory. His name added a lustre to the county in which he spent his declining years and in its history he deserves a conspicuous place. To its churches, schools and social life he lent the ripeness of his talent and the richness of his benevolence. As one of her greatest and her noblest citizens Staten Island will ever continue to honor his memory.

HON. ERASTUS BROOKS.—Among the many well known literary and professional gentlemen who from time to time have made their homes on Staten Island was Hon. Erastus Brooks, formerly editor of the "*New York Express*." He was a man well known in the religious, social and political life of Richmond county, and during the years 1878, 1879, 1881, 1882 and 1883, he was its representative in assembly.

Mr. Brooks was born in Portland, Me., January 31, 1815. Shortly before his birth his father, Captain James Brooks, who commanded a privateer during the war of 1812, had gone down with his vessel, leaving his wife and three children dependent for their support upon a government pension. As a result of these straightened circumstances, Erastus, at the age of 8 years, left his home for Boston with the object of earning his own living. He found a place in a grocery store and worked for his





Charles Brooks



board and clothes, studying diligently the while, at a night-school. Soon he entered a printing office and learned the trade of a compositor, and with the money which he earned he obtained enough education to enter "Brown University." Here he pursued a partial course, at the same time supporting himself by working at the compositor's case. When he was 18, he started a newspaper, called the "*Yankee*," after his father's brig, in Wiscasset, Me., soon after which he purchased the Haverhill "*Gazette*."

In 1835, Mr. Brooks went to Washington, D. C., and became the correspondent of a number of newspapers, an employment in which he continued for sixteen years. He engaged as associate editor of the "*New York Express*" with his brother, James Brooks, in 1840, and remained in this connection forty-one years. During this time he passed through various experiences, traveling in 1843 through Europe, and being wrecked off Sandy Hook on his return; an accident in which he suffered the loss of all his possessions. He published his paper almost single handed during the cholera epidemic, when people fled from the city, and he was among the first to use the telegraph for newspaper reports. Mr. Brooks was fond of telling of his news victories over rival journals, and some of these showed great sagacity and enterprise. For many years he served as one of the executive committee of the associated press, and was for a considerable time its general manager.

His entrance into politics was rather forced on him than sought, but once enlisted, he engaged with his whole heart in this as he did in everything which he undertook. He was elected to the state senate in 1853. Two years afterward he rendered his position prominent by a controversy with Archbishop Hughes relative to the limits to be set to the acquisition of church property by the Roman Catholic church and the exemption of property from taxation, he holding that, as its title was vested in the priest, it should be taxed when it reached beyond a certain value. The controversy, first carried on through the columns of the "*Courier and Enquirer*," finally went into the state senate, of which Mr. Brooks was elected a member on the know-nothing or American party ticket in 1853. This controversy, which attracted attention all over the world, was published in book form in 1855, under the title of "A Controversy on Church Property." The position he took led to his



being nominated by the know-nothings as a candidate for governor in 1856. From that time onward, he was frequently in public office, taking part in political conventions and serving the state in the constitutional conventions and in the assembly for a number of years. He became the leader of his party and one of the more prominent and influential men of the bodies in which he served.

Mr. Brooks was a man of great dignity and decorum. Having been called on to preside over important public assemblies through a long period, he had acquired habits of attention to business and prompt decision which made him an admirable executive. His acquaintance was extensive, and he knew the character and adaptations of men, so that in the formation of committees or the management of affairs he was of great use to the cause which he served. He was conservative in his principles and a man of strong convictions of duty. He might have had many more political honors than those which he won by positive merit, had he been able to crouch or fawn, or make unworthy bargains with party leaders, but he was a high-minded, upright man who served God and his own conscience first, and party second. Hence he was often ignored by the politicians who knew that he could not be used for their purposes, though they sorely needed his ability and wisdom.

He was a most benevolent man. He was not rich, and therefore could not endow charitable institutions, but he gave what was better than money, his personal service in their boards of direction. He spent freely of his time, even in the busiest period of his life, and gave careful and regular attention to the management of such charities as the "New York Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb" and the "Nursery and Child's Hospital." He visited the legislature in their behalf, and attended frequent meetings to promote their interests; through the press, and by personal influence he attracted attention to their wants, and secured new friends for them. When he took hold of any work he took hold "with both hands earnestly." In the National Charities Association, in the state board of health, in the national convention of deaf mute instructors, as a trustee of Cornell University, in the Indian conferences, and in the constitutional conventions, he was recognized as a man of wisdom and power, of profound convictions, untiring industry and excellent judgment. In social life





he was a pleasant companion. He had lived so much in public that his conversation abounded in reminiscences of the great men of a past generation, and he could draw at will upon a full and retentive memory to illustrate or adorn any subject of discussion. But his public life had not made him cold and careless of private and personal interests. He was too much of a Puritan to be very demonstrative, but he made close and warm friendships founded upon mutual esteem.

Mr. Brooks believed in reforming and elevating society by personal effort with individuals, and not by schemes and resolutions; and so, while he was a true philanthropist, he was what is better still, a true Christian. He believed in God, and served him first and always, and was known and respected as a religious man. Like the late Governor Seymour, who was his intimate friend, he honored religion and was esteemed and trusted by men of the church, as well as by men of the world who knew his staunch integrity, and by men of the state who knew his political virtue. He was a simple, humble Christian, who often opened the meetings of boards where he presided with prayer, and who, though firm in his own opinions, had charity and kindness for those who held different ones. His life was long honored and useful, his name will be cherished by many whom he has befriended, and will be recorded among the editors, the statesmen and the benefactors of this century in the state of New York and in the United States of America. His last public service was in connection with the Indian conference at Lake Mohonk in October, from which he returned seriously ill, and his last literary work was a review of that conference which he wrote for the "*New York Observer*."\* Mr. Brooks died November 25th, 1886. His loss was deeply felt, not only in his family and the community in which he lived, but throughout the whole country. The newspapers, of which he was so thorough an advocate, were filled with eulogistic articles taking up the story of his life anew. With his death passed from the stage of action one of the noblest and brightest examples of old fashioned statesmanship and patriotism. Staten Island had in him a true citizen, and its society profitted by association and acquaintance with him.

\* This life of Mr. Brooks, with slight modification, appeared in the "*New York Observer*," Dec. 9th, 1886.



CORNELIUS A. HART.—Perhaps no young man in Richmond county has so distinguished himself for his energy and business ability as has the present county clerk, Cornelius A. Hart. Born under no advantageous circumstances—surrounded by none of those conditions which usually foster ambition and create desire to shine, he has yet, though but thirty-seven years of age, succeeded in gaining for himself a sound and practical education, the possession of ample fortune and a popularity second to that of no other individual on Staten Island.

Mr. Hart was born in New Brighton in 1851. After a preliminary course at the public school in that village he attended the academy conducted by Dr. Scheck in the building now known as "Belmont Hall." In 1868 he commenced a course of study at the New York Commercial College, which he left to enter the importing house of James Reid & Co., of New York city. Here in a short period of time he succeeded in raising himself from the lowest to the highest position in the employ of the firm, passing through every grade in the office and having nine clerks under his charge at the time of his leave taking.

Mr. Hart's father, Patrick Hart, had been for many years a prominent and successful contractor on Staten Island. It was he who laid out Bard avenue and many of the principal streets in the neighborhood of New Brighton, and his son, influenced by his example, left the firm with which he was employed to engage in the same business. His remarkable success in it is well known to the people of Staten Island.

Mr. Hart's connection with the laying out of new streets and with improvements generally, has induced him to make numerous and large investments in real estate which he is constantly improving and reselling in lots to suit purchasers. In 1884, he bought a large tract of land in New Brighton through which he has opened seven avenues, Forest, Hart, Sharon, Oakwood, Greenwood, Laurel and University place. The whole is divided into three hundred and fifty city lots and situated in one of the most attractive localities on the island. Mr. Hart is one of the largest tax-payers in the town of Castleton. He has also recently purchased other lots in New Brighton, a large plot of ground in West Brighton and the residence and grounds of the late Commodore Sloat, commander of the United States Navy. His extensive advertise-





*Cornelius A. Hart*



ments in the New York "*World*" and other New York daily papers are rapidly bringing him into prominence as a real estate speculator and owner.

To speak of Mr. Hart's political career is but to repeat what is already known throughout the whole of Richmond county. From his boyhood days he took an interest in politics and his connection with the democratic party has resulted in benefit both to it and himself. In 1876 he was elected trustee of the village of New Brighton by the largest majority ever given a candidate from the Second ward. In 1878 he was elected county clerk by a phenominally large majority, was reelected to the position in 1881, his antagonist receiving but 278 votes out of a total of about 7,000 cast, and was again elected in 1884, when he ran 1,000 votes ahead of the Cleveland majority, in itself the largest ever received by a presidential ticket in the county. When he first entered the clerk's office at Richmond he found books and papers scattered about in confusion, and the most valuable historical documents in process of slow destruction from want of the most ordinary care. He immediately set himself to work with that determination and will which characterized all his actions, and in a short time, to the great relief of the legal fraternity with whom he has most of his dealings, had so thoroughly straightened affairs as to draw down upon himself the encomiums of the entire county press irrespective of party. The lack of partiality which he has shown in all his dealings has not been the least noticeable feature of his administration at Richmond, and his pleasant word for all policy has greatly added to his popularity as a man.

He numbers among his friends and adherents both democrats and republicans, rich and poor, young and old. His benevolent and charitable disposition is widely known and appreciated, and his brilliant parts are constantly attracting to him the notice of substantial and thoughtful business men. This is shown by the fact that he was chosen by the Rapid Transit Railroad Company to represent their cause at Washington, which he did with ability and with success.

Mr. Hart was married, June 23, 1875, to Miss Hannah Bowman of New Brighton, whose exemplary life won for her many friends, and whose sad death, July 25, 1882, was deeply felt throughout the entire community. Mr. Hart is a member of St. Peter's church, New Brighton, and is liberal in his gifts toward its sup-





port. He is also connected with many clubs, societies and social organizations. In his tastes he is domestic, though he is fond of athletic sports, especially of hunting and fishing, which he frequently travels long distances to enjoy. He is on intimate terms with many of the foremost newspaper men in the country, and extracts in the daily papers referring to him are numerous, some coming even from California. The many incidents and laughable stories relating to him which have been published will long be remembered, and the popularity which he has acquired by his fine social qualities is built on a lasting foundation. We take pleasure in presenting this short sketch of his life, especially to his many young friends on Staten Island. His history strikingly illustrates the truth of the following lines from a poem which he has preserved in a scrap book containing many allusions to him, now in the author's possession.

“There is no chance, no destiny, no fate  
Can circumvent or hinder or control  
The firm resolve of a determined soul.

\* \* \* \* \*

Let the fool prate of Luck. The fortunate  
Is he whose earnest purpose never swerves,  
Whose slightest action or inaction serves  
The one great aim. Why, even death stands still  
And waits an hour sometimes for such a will.”



## CHAPTER VIII.

### CHURCHES AND RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS.

The Dutch Reformed Churches.—The Episcopal Churches.—Baptist Churches.—Methodist Churches.—The Moravian Church.—The Roman Catholic Churches.—The Church of the Huguenots.—Unitarian Church.—Presbyterian Churches.—Lutheran Churches.—Y. M. C. A.

FOR a large part of the history of the Dutch Reformed denomination on the island we are indebted to the venerable pastor of the church at Port Richmond, Rev. James Brownlee, D. D., who enjoys the very unusual honor of a pastorate of more than fifty years' duration.

There is evidence enough to prove, in an unbroken chain, the identity of this church, from the time when the little band of Waldenses first settled on these shores and established the worship of the Redeemer for whom they had suffered so much.

It would be a matter of great interest to us now to know more of the way in which our ancestors worshipped; their difficulties, and struggles, and successes. Even their names, standing on the record, would be of interest to their descendants. Many of these, indeed, we have, in an old register of baptisms in the Dutch language, from 1696 onward, and many names of families also which have no living representatives on the island. This record will be found in another part of this work.

The Rev. Samuel Drisius, who was one of the pastors of the Dutch church in New York, then New Amsterdam, from 1652 to 1682, preached regularly once a month to the Waldenses on Staten Island from about 1660 onward. It may be fairly inferred from that fact, that there was a little church of that noble and devoted people established here; not a church building, perhaps, till later, but a little band of Christ's people, worshipping in some spot where they found it most convenient; it might be in one of de Vries' buildings for the dressing of buck-



skin ; it might be under some spreading oak of the primeval forest at "Oude Dorp," where their first settlement was made. Doctor De Witt, some years before his death, in a brief note to Doctor Brownlee, says on this subject :

"During the Dutch Colonial government there was a settlement of the persecuted French Vaudois, or Waldenses, on Staten Island, as early as 1660. The Rev. Samuel Drisius, of our church in this city, crossed the bay once a month to preach to them. There was a Huguenot settlement on the Island a short time afterward, parties of these having fled to Holland to escape from persecution, and having come over to New Netherlands in company with their new friends. After a season the French church and organization passed away, and the great body of its members became blended with the Dutch inhabitants, in the Reformed Dutch church. The fact of the settlement of a considerable number of the persecuted Waldenses on Staten Island is very interesting. They had fled from the dreadful persecutions in the valleys of Piedmont, to Holland, and were sent, at the expense of the city of Amsterdam, amply provided for, to New Netherlands in America."

We may be certain that these martyrs for the faith of Christ, whose religion was everything to them, would not be long content without some regular church organization, and the stated enjoyment of ordinances ; and therefore we conclude that soon after 1660, under the care of Dominie Drisius, this privilege was secured by them.

In 1661 grants of land on the island were made to several persons, among whom were some Waldenses, and also many Huguenots, who had fled hither from La Rochelle. They commenced a new settlement a few miles south of the Narrows, near that of de Vries already mentioned, and built a little village of twelve or fourteen houses, and a block-house with two small guns and a garrison of ten soldiers, for protection against the Indians. It was to this little colony, at their earnest request, that Dominie Drisius, who could preach in French, ministered once a month, dispensing the sacraments at regular intervals, while the colony was too feeble to support a minister of its own. The descendants of these Waldenses and Huguenots are still numerous on the island, and bear some of the oldest and most honored names among us. Many of them have become connected with other denominations, partly from con-



venience of residence, but more on account of the persistence of the Dutch church in the use of the language of the Fatherland, long after English had become the prevailing tongue.

In the year 1680 it is known that there were two churches, with houses of worship on the island. One, and perhaps the first built, was a church of the Huguenots at Fresh kill, on what is known as the Seaman farm. The services in this church for nearly forty years later were conducted in French, and although all vestiges of the church building have disappeared, there is still the little grave-yard with a few dilapidated gravestones to mark the spot where it stood.

Very soon after this there was another French church built at Stony Brook, on the road from Quarantine to Amboy, not far from what was long known as the Black Horse tavern. This was built by the Waldenses from "Oude Dorp," whose numbers had increased and led them to extend their settlements. All remains, save some stones of the foundation of this church, have disappeared; but here, too, there are some graves of these noble exiles.

About the same time (1680) there are traces of a church on the north side, in which the services were in the Dutch language, the Hollanders having settled in considerable numbers along the kills.

As yet these churches had no settled pastor of their own. Along with Dominie Drisius, Dominie Selyns, who was pastor of the churches of Brooklyn, Bushwick and Gravesend, from 1660 to 1701—with an interval of some years, during which he revisited Holland—preached to the churches here at stated times.

In 1682 and 1683, Dominie Tarchemaker, from the University of Utrecht, supplied the churches on the island. He afterward removed to Schenectady, and perished there in a massacre by the Indians in February, 1690.

The Rev. Pierre Daillé, who had been professor in the College of Saumur, and who came to America in 1683, and was colleague to Dominie Selyns from that year to 1692, preached frequently to the Huguenots on Staten Island, and also at New Rochelle, and elsewhere in the vicinity of New York. Dominie Selyns, in a letter to the Classis of Amsterdam, speaks of him as being "full of fire, godliness and learning. Banished





on account of his religion, he maintains the cause of Christ with untiring zeal."

About this time, from 1687 onward, for nearly two years, the church at Stony Brook was supplied by a certain Laurentius Van den Bosch, or Van Bosen, as it was sometimes written. His character seems to have been under a cloud, for he was suspended from the ministry by Dominie Selyns and others, who could not wait for the slow process of sending their proceedings to be reviewed by the authorities in Holland, which in those times frequently consumed a whole year. Van Bosen afterward went to Maryland.

From 1694 for about three years the churches were without any stated supply. They were visited frequently, however, and the ordinances administered to them by the ministers of New York and Long Island. There are also frequent records of baptisms by Dominie Batolvius, as it is written, and also by Dominie Gilliam, whose residence is not mentioned. It has been ascertained that these names indicate the Rev. Guillaume Bertholf, who was pastor of the churches of Aquachanonck and Hackensack, N. J., from 1694 to 1724, and whose services were much in demand on the island.

In 1697 the French church at Freshkill obtained the services of a pastor of their own. The Rev. Dr. David Bonrepos, who had been settled several years at New Rochelle, came to Staten Island, and remained till 1717, preaching also to the church at Stony Brook. In the latter year the good old pastor was compelled by age and infirmities to relinquish his charge, and left the island.

In 1714 a grant was made by Governor Hunter, to the representatives of the "Reformed Protestant Dutch Church," to erect a new house of worship at some convenient place on the north shore, the place not specified. The grant for a *new* church implies an old one previously existing. The grant itself is still extant, and in perfect preservation. It is signed by the governor, and dated at Fort George, September 3, 1714.

Before 1717 there must have been a Dutch church in the village of Richmond, although no record of it exists. In that year, after the retirement of Dr. Bonrepos, the churches at Freshkill and at Stony Brook united with the Dutch inhabitants, who had gradually become the preponderating element in the population, and together built a new church in the vil-



lage of Richmond, which stood, probably, in or near a little graveyard nearly opposite the court house.

About the same time as this grant from Governor Hunter, or perhaps a year earlier, in the twelfth year of the reign of Queen Anne, which would be 1713, St. Andrew's church in Richmond was erected. The first accounts of the settlement of the English church, as it was then called, are interesting and characteristic. There is a "Historical account of the society for propagating the gospel in the British Colonies," by David Humphreys, D. D., published in London, 1730. A copy is to be found in the rooms of the Long Island Historical Society, in Brooklyn.

It appears that the Rev. Mr. McKenzie was sent here as a missionary in 1704, and met with a very kind reception from the people, although scarcely one third of them were English. The rest were Dutch and French. The French had a minister of their own, and had built a church. The English had no place convenient for divine worship, and the French generously granted the use of their church to Mr. McKenzie, which he occupied for seven years, till St. Andrew's was built. That was characteristic of the French and the Dutch, who were by this time cordially blending in their worship, as their doctrines were identical.

It is said that the Dutch were at first somewhat averse to the English liturgy, but as it was taken for granted that their objections could only arise from their ignorance of it, Mr. McKenzie sent to London for a good supply of prayer books in Dutch, and distributed them freely among the people, after which, it is added, "they found no fault with it, and began to have a just esteem for our excellent form of worship." That was a wise scheme, and accounts, in part at least, for so many Dutch and French names in St. Andrew's church.

Then again Mr. McKenzie, who seems to have been a very zealous man, had the island divided into three precincts, and a teacher was appointed in each, who was supported by a grant from the society in London. These taught, of course, in the English language, and also taught the children in the church catechism, with the explanations, and taught them also to join in public worship.

In 1712 "the Justices of Richmond County, the High Sheriff, the Clerk and the Commander-in-Chief of Her Majesty's militia



in the County, as well for themselves as in the name, and at the desire of the other inhabitants of the said County members of the Church of England," return thanks to the society in London for the support of their worthy pastor, whom they highly and justly praise. And then they go on to say, "upon his first induction there were not above four or five in the whole county who knew anything of our excellent liturgy and form of worship, and many of them knew little more of any religion than the common notion of a Deity; and as their ignorance was great, so was their practice irregular and barbarous. But now, by the blessing of God attending his labors, our church increases; a considerable reformation is wrought, and something of the face of Christianity is seen among us."

It will be observed that this is written while they had as yet no place of worship of their own, and were still occupying the French church "by sufferance," as they themselves express it. And yet these blessed justices and high sheriff and the rest ignore with celestial complacency the fact that there had been Christian worship on the island for more than fifty years, and at least three Christian churches built for more than thirty years, and sustained by the descendants of the Waldenses and Huguenots, among the noblest Christian men and women the world has ever seen; that one of these churches for seven years past had charitably given shelter to these members of the English church in their religious services.

In the meantime the church on the north side, although a house of worship was erected at a very early period, seems to have been dependent on such occasional services as the neighboring ministers were able to render. Besides those of Drisius, Selyus, Dailé and Bertholf, there were frequent services by Dominic Freeman, of New Utrecht, on Long Island, and also by Dominic Anthonius, of Flatbush, Flatlands and Bushwick, Long Island. In one instance a baptism is recorded as performed by "Dom. Anthony of Staaten Eiland," but it is evidently a mistake for Long Island. There are also frequent records of baptisms "door Dominy uit Esopus," whose name is not mentioned, but who was without doubt the Rev. Petrus Vas, who was minister at Esopus, or Kingston, and afterward at Rhinebeck from 1710 to 1756, and who died at the age of 96.

After the retirement of Dr. Bonrepos, in 1717, the three



churches, of the Waldenses at Stony Brook, of the Huguenots at Freshkill, and the Dutch at Richmond, united and came to worship together at Richmond. We can find no account of this Dutch church further than the fact of their having a house of worship to offer to the united churches, which is a matter of record. In that year the church at the north side and this united church at Richmond joined in a call to Rev. Cornelius VanSantvoord, of Leyden, in Holland. He accepted the call, and came over to this country in 1718, when he was settled as pastor over these churches. It was thus that the churches on the island became blended into one, and transmitted to us here the honorable ancestry to which we lay claim, as the representatives of the Waldenses and the Huguenots, merging their organization at length in that of the more rapidly increasing Dutch.

There is no date of the settlement of Dominie Van Santvoord extant; but the first baptism administered by him is recorded April 20th, 1718, the child's name being Johannes Van Namen. Dominie Van Santvoord was a man of admirable character and abilities, and is known to have ministered with great acceptance from time to time, in the neighboring churches of New Jersey and Long Island as well as in the city. He remained in his charge here, preaching also frequently at Second River, now Belleville, N. J., until 1742, when he removed to Schenectady. Among the papers in possession of the consistory there is a bundle of receipts for salary from Dominie Van Santvoord, extending over several years. They are written in beautiful handwriting, and are sometimes given for very small sums, on one occasion "Twee ponden, acht schellingen," being carefully acknowledged. They indicate the fact of his ministering to the two churches, that on the north side being evidently the principal one. He was the author of several works of a theological character. He also kept up a correspondence with the professors of the University of Leyden, by whom he was much esteemed.

After Dr. Van Santvoord left the island there is an interval of eight years, up to 1750, of which no record can be found. Occasional services were performed, and baptisms administered by ministers from the city, and also by Dominies Vas and Anthonius as before.

In 1750 the church on the north side united with that at Ber-





gen, N. J., in a call to a minister to supply them in common. His name was Petrus De Wint. The agreement drawn up by the consistories regarding their respective shares of the services, and their contributions for the minister's support, is very specific. Each was to have a righteous half of the services, and to make a righteous half of the payment. The church at Bergen was to furnish a parsonage and sufficient firewood. That on Staten Island engaged to give "an able riding horse, with all that belongs to it." After that it was stipulated that "the dominie was to look out for his own horse."

De Wint accepted the call, and commenced his labors in the two churches in 1751; but these did not continue long. The call had to be sent to Holland, to be approved by the Classis of Amsterdam, and they immediately wrote back to the consistory at Bergen that De Wint was an imposter, and that the credentials by which he had obtained a favorable reception were forgeries. Of course he was at once discharged by the two consistories; and a final settlement was had with him at Bergen, which is recorded in the minutes of that consistory, June 22, 1752.

In June, 1753, the two churches again joined in calling Mr. William Jackson, then a student under the care of Rev. John Frelinghuysen, of Raritan, N. J. By the terms of the call Mr. Jackson was to proceed to Holland to complete his studies there, the churches agreeing, in the meantime, to pay him an annual sum for his support. He remained in Holland four years and a half, and was ordained there. On his return he was installed pastor of the two churches, in 1757.

Mr. Jackson was much esteemed as a preacher, and in the reformed Dutch churches in Middlesex and Somerset counties, had a reputation as a field preacher scarcely inferior to Whitfield. Instances are recorded in which the crowds assembled to hear him could not be contained in any church, and the services had to be held in the open air. After ministering for upward of a quarter of a century, he became subject to fits of mental aberration; not frequent at first, but very afflictive; and while suffering from them he would say strange things in the pulpit, by which the gravity of his hearers was sorely disturbed, while the body of his discourse would be sound and edifying. His illness at last increased to such a degree that the two churches had to apply to the Classis of Hackensack for a



commission to inquire into his case. This met in December, 1789, and after a patient investigation, continued during three days, Mr. Jackson's insanity was deemed to be such as to preclude the hope of his farther usefulness, and he was advised to return his call. This he finally did, although with extreme reluctance, for his heart was set upon his Master's work. He never seemed willing to stop when preaching. On one occasion, when at New Brunswick, his audience became so weary that his friend, Hon. James Schureman, ventured to give him a hint by holding up his watch. The dominie said to him quietly, "Schureman, put up your watch, Paul preached till midnight."

He finally bound himself under a penalty of five hundred pounds not to preach, or administer the sacraments within the bounds of the two churches. His ministry lasted thirty-two years, and the two churches, greatly to their honor, united in making a comfortable provision for their pastor as long as he lived.

After Mr. Jackson resigned his ministry the connection between the two churches of Bergen and Staten Island was dissolved, having continued harmoniously thirty-nine years. In 1769 a deed was given by Jacob Rezeau to the Rev. Mr. Jackson and the consistory of the Reformed Dutch church at Richmond and the session of the English Presbyterian church at Stony Brook, for land in the village of Richmond on which to build a church, these two bodies being desirous of uniting.

From this it would appear that after the Waldenses left Stony Brook, in order to unite with the Dutch and the French Huguenots in 1717, as already mentioned, a Presbyterian church was formed in the place which they had occupied. The deed mentions the names of James Rezeau and Samuel Broome as "the present Elders of the English Presbyterian Church, according to the Westminster Confession of Faith, Catechism and Directory, agreeable to the present established Church of Scotland." The deed conveyed a small lot, sixty-five feet by fifty-five, to these parties. As far as we can understand it this is the ground on which the present Reformed church in Richmond stands. The church then standing at Stony Brook was to be removed and rebuilt on this lot. The deed was granted by the donor "in consideration of the pious and laudable design of the said parties, and also of the sum of ten shillings,



lawful money of the province of New York, to him in hand paid." It is distinctly specified that if ever any attempt shall be made to alienate the property from sacred to secular purposes, it shall be lawful for the grantor, his heirs or assigns, to enter on it and reclaim it. This, unhappily, seems a not impossible contingency, in the present condition of that church.

The first minutes of the consistory of the Port Richmond church, preserved in regular form, are dated June 25, 1785. At a meeting then held, this minute is recorded, along with some others not of interest, "our house of worship—the six-sided building described before—having been destroyed in the late unhappy war, it was resolved to build a new one, of brick." The account is that the building was greatly injured by fire by the British troops, and afterward blown down in a severe storm. A committee was appointed to raise money for the purpose at home and in the neighboring churches, and to superintend the building. There are no particulars of the progress of the work, but it was ready for service in March, 1788.

In 1790, the Rev. Peter Stryker was ordained minister of this church, and remained till 1794, when he accepted a call from Second River, now Belleville, N. J. During his incumbency the church was incorporated, in 1792, under the style and title of "The Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, on Staten Island," the names of the incorporators being Rev. Peter Stryker, Hendrick Garretson, John Van Pelt, Wilhelmus Vreeland, John Garretson, William Merrill, Peter Haughwout, Abraham Prah, and Nicholas Haughwout.

After Mr. Stryker's departure, the church remained without a pastor for three years, when Mr. Thomas Kirby was ordained over it. He remained a little over three years, when he was obliged to resign; the means of his support having been almost entirely withdrawn. He was an Englishman without culture, unable even to spell correctly, and the minutes in his handwriting are such as would disgrace a schoolboy. Fifty years ago there were many living who had sat under his ministry, and knew him well. He soon showed himself to be a man without much character, and his habits were so gross as to disgust most of those who came into contact with him. He was suspended from the ministry for intemperance after leaving the island, but was afterward restored, and went to Canada.



The church at Richmond, erected on Mr. Rezeau's grant, was burnt down also, during the war, by the British troops, because it was, as they termed it, a rebel church. "This speaks well," says Doctor Brownlee, "for the descendants of the Waldenses and the Huguenots, and the Dutch with whom they blended; and *their* descendants may feel proud that it did not earn the distinction of being allowed to stand. There were no tories then in our churches, here or at Richmond; and so both of them were burnt."

During Mr. Kirby's ministry, an application was made by Benjamin Swaim and Israel Oakley, for the concurrence of the consistory here in building a new church at Richmond, on the foundation of the old French church; and steps were taken to organize a church, by ordaining two elders and two deacons. Very particular arrangements were also made as to the times and the amount of service to be rendered by the pastor; but Mr. Kirby was not the man to succeed in a work of that kind, and the project was not carried out till some years later.

On the 16th of May, 1802, Rev. Peter I. Van Pelt, afterward Doctor Van Pelt, was ordained pastor of the church, and remained till 1835, when the relation between him and the church was dissolved by mutual consent. Dr. Van Pelt's labors were exceedingly popular and successful from the first; and numerous additions were made to the membership of the church at almost every communion.

During the incumbency of Dr. Van Pelt, a building was erected on the spot now occupied by the brick stores in Port Richmond, then the property of the church, with the view of establishing a parochial school, under the care of the church. The project, however, did not succeed very well; and, after trying two or three teachers, it was finally given up. What is chiefly interesting in connection with this, is the fact of a Sabbath school being opened in the building as early as 1812, and believed to have been among the earliest in this country.

In 1835, on the fourth Sabbath of August, the present pastor, Rev. James Brownlee, was ordained; and through a kind Providence remains to this day. During all these years the church has been, on the whole, growing, and has made many efforts and some sacrifices to reach its present position, and "provide things honest in sight of all men."

"Soon after my settlement, says Dr. Brownlee, "it was de-





terminated to repair the old church, which had become much dilapidated. This was immediately done, at a cost of over \$4,000. The next year lots were purchased for a parsonage, and a house was erected, the whole costing over \$3,000.

"In 1845 it was found that the church was not large enough for those desiring to worship in it, and after much discussion as to enlarging the old building or erecting a new one, it was finally resolved to build anew. This was accordingly done, and the house which is now occupied was built, at a cost of

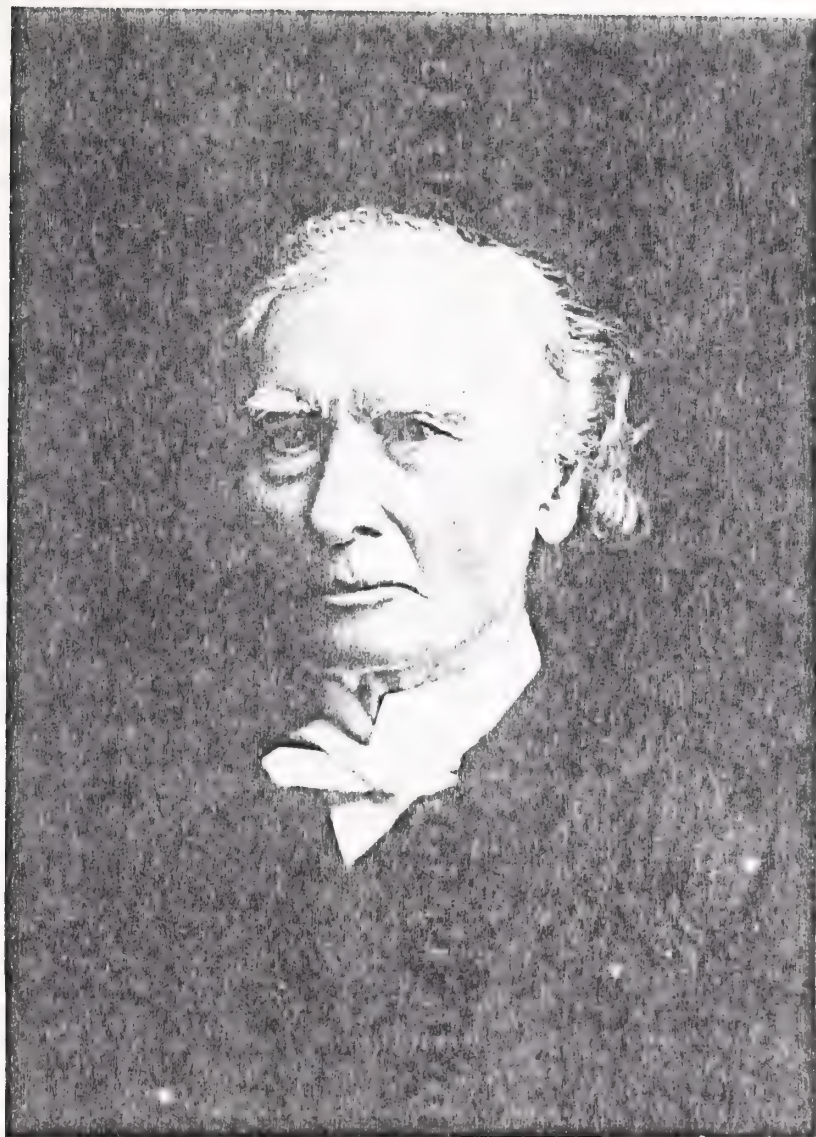


PORT RICHMOND DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH.

\$10,000, and dedicated in February, 1846, the Rev. Dr. De Witt, and other clergymen participating in the services. Since then the parsonage has been enlarged and beautified at a cost of \$5,000, and is now one of the most convenient and comfortable anywhere to be found.

"A necessity having long been felt for some additional burying ground, that around the church as far as it is available being almost completely filled up, about the year 1874 the consistory purchased a piece of ground for a cemetery, most eligibly situated, and in one of the most beautiful spots on the island.





*James Brownlee*



The consistory felt that this was necessary, as they had no proper space to bury their dead, and the time cannot be far distant when the increase of population and the demands of business may render it necessary, as in so many other places, to remove the dead farther from the dwellings of men.

“During all these years the church has been much favored in spiritual things. For a time after my settlement there was a most depressing state of coldness—almost of lethargy—in the church. But we had a band of praying men among us, men of faith, who never ceased to plead before the mercy seat; and speedily their prayers were heard. Converts began to come in in numbers, into our fold; and from that time to the present, a year has never passed, and rarely a communion season, without some additions to our membership. In 1838, thirteen were added to our list of members, by confession. In the year following, sixteen, and so on. God never left himself without a witness among us.

“We also have had our seasons of gracious revival—but revival of the right sort; not that which is got up, but that which comes down; which begins to show itself in a silent, prevalent earnestness, and diligent attendance on the prayer-meetings and other means of grace. Of that kind was the gracious season of 1843-44, when twenty-eight were brought into the church; some of whom are among the most warm-hearted and devoted followers of Christ among us to this day.

“In 1858, there was another very remarkable outpouring of the spirit among us. It began as before, silently and without any concerted action.

“The consistory and myself sought rather to guide and regulate, than to stimulate it; while at the same time we could not but discern and gratefully recognize the hand of the Lord. In April of that year, fifty were received in fellowship at one communion; and within the year thirty-three more, making eighty-three in all. It was a season that stirred the souls of God’s people to their depths, in joy and praise, and caused their Christian graces to shine forth with new and holy lustre.

“Our Sabbath school has long been prosperous. It has for years been under the very best management, without any attempt at display; without any efforts or contrivances to allure teachers or scholars from quarters to which courtesy forbade us to apply. We have kept to the steady purpose of



cultivating the useful and solid, rather than the entertaining.

"It would be interesting, if space permitted, to give short sketches of some of the fathers of the church, who have gone to their reward from among us. Allow me very briefly to mention a few.

"The first to pass away were Jacob Bodine and Joshua Mersereau, both of Huguenot origin, and both exhibiting the inefaceable traits of their lineage, in the vivacity and energy which we usually attribute to the French blood. Mr. Bodine was for many years a member of the consistory, and an active and untiring friend of the church. He and Mr. Mersereau, along with Dr. Clark, had the whole burden of remodelling the old church to bear, and of building the parsonage; and amid many difficulties, chiefly met and surmounted by Mr. Bodine's business skill and tact, they succeeded, to the satisfaction of all concerned.

"Mr. Mersereau was somewhat reserved in his manner; prompt, decided, and resolute. He had the appearance, to those who did not know him, of being rather stern; but his friends knew him to be of the most kindly and genial disposition, when he met them in the quiet family circle. He was a man of incorruptible integrity, before whom no one could safely venture to commit any meanact. He, too, was a life-long steady friend of his church.

"Then there was Judge Tysen, who had been member of congress, and for many years first associate judge of the county; a most careful and accurate business man, for many years the treasurer of the church; always ready, by word and deed, to advance the interests of the church; faithful and liberal in all his ways. To him, along with George Cadmus and myself, was committed the duty of overseeing the building of the present church, and on him fell by far the heaviest share. He was indefatigable in his attention to the work while it was in progress, and professed himself amply rewarded for his labor when he saw the building completed—which had a much more creditable appearance then than it bears to-day, among the many new church edifices which have been built all around us. He was re-elected to the office of elder again and again, as long as he would consent to serve; and when he was taken away, in ripe old age, it seemed as if the most prominent place in the church was left empty.





“There was Aartie Housman, as he was commonly called. His name is entered on the record as Aaron, but I think it must have been a mistake for Arthur. Many will remember him as he sat under the gallery, with his tall, erect, massive frame, and his magnificent head, with flowing white hair, which at once attracted the notice of every stranger who entered the pulpit, and which might have served as a model for a head of Jupiter. He was a man of but limited education, but of strong good sense and natural intelligence; who with greater advantages of training, could not have failed to distinguish himself.

“Garrit Martling, for many years an elder and warm friend of the church, was a man of few words, but his face beamed with the kindliness which filled his heart; and when any one asked a favor of him, he always granted it as if it were conferred upon himself, delighted with the opportunity of doing a kind act.

“Solomon Zeluff was long an elder. Quiet and reserved in manner, but faithful to all that he deemed right; he was a man of prayer, and earnestly attached to the doctrines and usages of his church.

“George Cadmus was not a member of the church, but a constant and generous friend. Without doubt, he was a true Christian for years before his death, although, from unaffected humility, he shrank from taking the name openly. Open hearted, full of quips and jokes, he was a most attractive companion and friend, beloved by all who knew him.

“Paul La Tourette, also long an elder, was of Huguenot origin, and showed it in form and manner. A man of prayer and faith beyond many, he was strong in the Scriptures. Indeed, his Bible was almost his exclusive study. His mind was clear and logical, grasping at once the main points of any subject; and although he had not enjoyed many advantages of education in early life, there were very few who could hold an argument with him successfully on any Scriptural or doctrinal point. He was remarkably fluent in prayer; and so warm were his feelings and so much did he become engaged that sometimes he would pray for half an hour, or even three-quarters; and would be surprised when his friends told him how long he had been on his knees.

“Time would fail to speak of all whom we lovingly remember. But I must mention John Garretson (Judge Garretson, as



he was commonly called), who had also been in congress. His name is the first of those subscribed to my call ; and he was the first to depart. He and his wife Martha were the oldest members of the church at Richmond, having been received in Dominie Jackson's time. He was a devoted Christian, and one of the finest specimens of the Christian gentleman ; polished, and even courtly in his manners, which his usual dress and appearance did not lead one to expect. He was a man of very extensive information, and clear, incisive intellect ; and would have greatly surprised any stranger who might have taken him for nothing more than the plain farmer he appeared to be. His household was one of the most delightful I ever knew. It was probably the last in the county in which the Dutch language was spoken. He and his wife always used it when alone ; and when, at my request, they would speak it, it seemed to lose every trace of uncouthness, which those unacquainted with it are apt to attribute to it, and to be the very dialect of warm, homely, household regard.

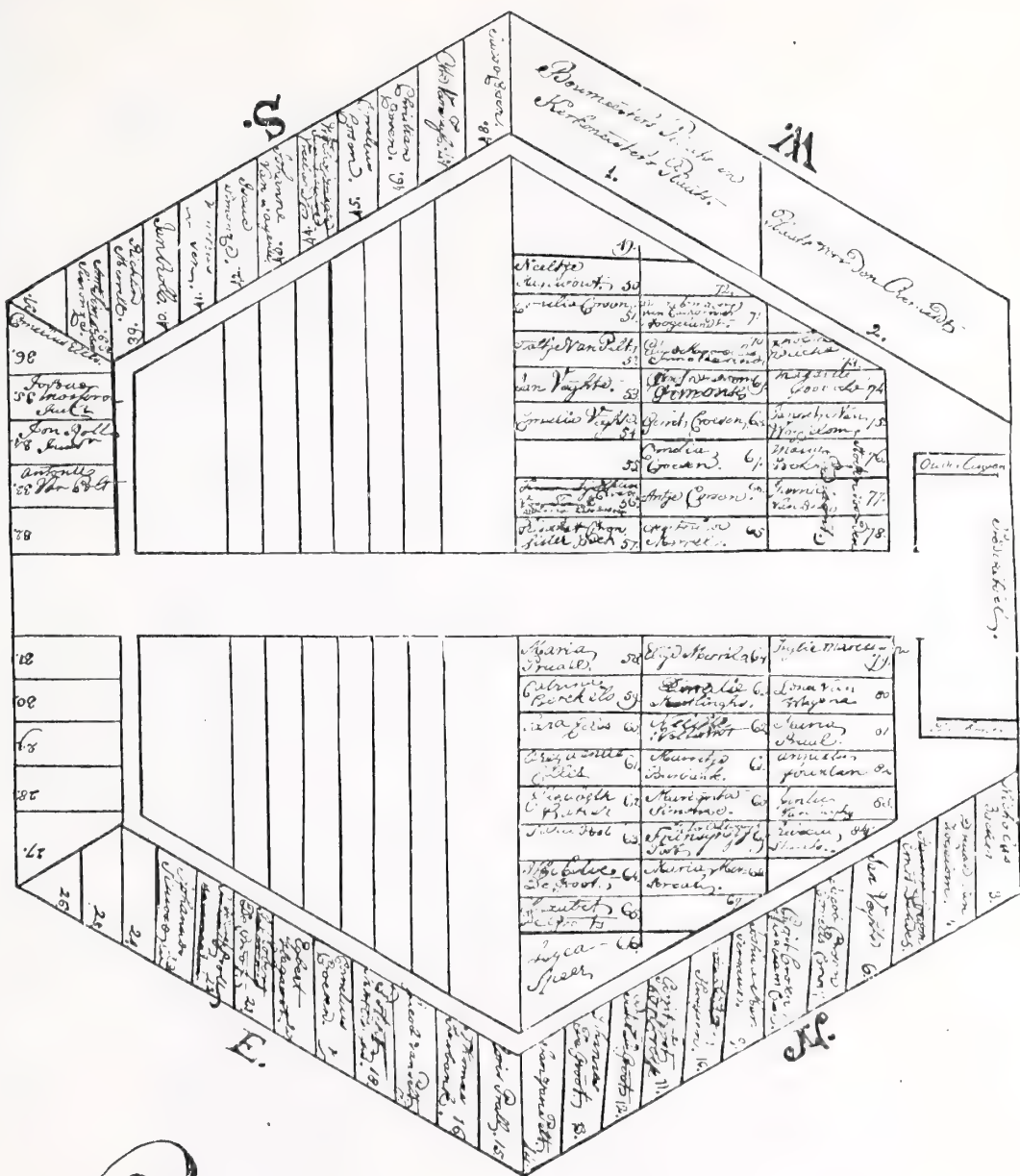
“The judge used to ride to church at Port Richmond every Sabbath, for years, till the Richmond church was built, in 1808; and, although he lived twelve miles away, there was no more regular attendant than he. I remember well his saying, ‘I do not know what has come to our young people now ; it takes so little to keep them home on a Sabbath day. I have gone for years, through all weather, and it never hurt me.’ And, looking kindly at his aged companion he added, ‘and the *juifvrouw* always went with me. It took a storm—mind, I say a *storm*—to keep her home.’

“I cherish his memory with grateful affection. He was the first to speak words of encouragement to me when I came here, without experience in the ministry ; and to predict that there was in the young dominie ‘something that would wear.’ He was my kind friend to his dying day.”

Rev. Alfred H. Demarest was called as associate pastor to Doctor Brownlee, and was ordained and installed November 6, 1884.

The fiftieth anniversary of the settlement of Doctor Brownlee was celebrated on Sunday, August 23, 1885. At that time it was said that Mrs. Martha Miller, of Mariners' Harbor, was the only person living who was a communicant of the church at the time of Doctor Brownlee's installation. Several of the neigh-





Platform van den Christelyk Nederduytsche Kerck op Staten Eil.  
den 30. 1768 Anno Domini 1751.

Dan Goffart, Sect.



boring churches suspended services in the morning out of respect to this celebration.

At that time Doctor Brownlee had, during the fifty years of his pastorate, baptized eight hundred and thirty-nine children and seventy adults; married six hundred and twenty-four couples, attended about six hundred and fifty burials; received seven hundred and twenty-one persons into the communion of the church; preached four thousand three hundred and sixty-six written sermons, and delivered about five thousand extempore addresses at evening prayer-meetings, funerals and on other occasions. The fact was a remarkable one that he had married a couple, not long before, whose parents he had married in 1860, and whose grand-parents he had married in 1838.

The record of baptisms belonging to this early church, and covering about half a century from 1696 onward, has been transcribed for this work, and will be found in this chapter.

Accompanying this article will be found a diagram of the second edifice of this church which stood at Port Richmond about where the present church stands. It was built about 1714 and destroyed during the revolution. The following explanations of the diagram of the old church were given by Mr. J. J. Clute.

Translation of the title: "Plan of the Christian Low Dutch Church on Staten Island, the 30th September, in the year of our Lord 1751, made by Daniel Corsen."

A. Predikestoel—Pulpit. B. Ouderlingen—Elders. C. Diakenen—Deacons.  
1 Bouncester's Plaats en Kerkmeester's Plaats—The Master-Builder's Place and the Church-Warden's Place.

2 Plaats voor den Overheid—Place for the Magistrate.

- |   |                                 |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 3 Nicholas Backer,                      | 23 Johannes Simonson,           |
| 4 Douwe Van Wogelom,                    | The succeeding nine are vacant. |
| 5 Ernst Lende, Henrik Croesen,          | 33 Antonie Van Pelt,            |
| 6 Jan Veghte,                           | 34 Jon Roll, Junr.,             |
| 7 Jacob Corsen, Cornelis Corsen,        | 35 Joseac Morseroe, Junr.,      |
| 8 Gerrit Croesen, Abraham Croesen,      | 36 Cornelius Elles,             |
| 9 Joshua Mersereaux,                    | 37 Vacant,                      |
| 10 Gerrit Kroessen,                     | 38 Art Simonson or Simonze,     |
| 11 Gerrit Post, Cors Krock,             | 39 Richard Merrell,             |
| 12 Pieter De Groot,                     | 40 Jan Roll,                    |
| 13 Johannes De Groot,                   | 41 Cornelius ——— sen.,          |
| 14 Jan Van Pelt, and another illegible, | 42 Isaac Simonze,               |
| 15 Joris Prall,                         | 43 Johanne Vanwagena,           |
| 16 Thomas Burbank,                      | 44 Wilhelmus Vreelandt,         |
| 17 Jacob Van Pelt,                      | 45 Cornelius Corsen,            |
| 18 Peter Marthinghe,                    | 46 Christian Corsen,            |
| 19 Cornelius Croesen,                   | 47 Otto Van Tuyl,               |
| 20 Egbert Hagabot,                      | 48 Jacob Corsen,                |
| 21 Robert De Groot,                     | 49 Vacant,                      |
| 22 Hendrik Prall, and another erased,   | 50 Neeltje Hagewout.            |





51 Cornelia Corsen,	64 <i>Elsje Merrill,</i>
52 Aaltje Van Pelt,	65 <i>Gertruyde Merrill,</i>
53 Jan Veghte,	66 <i>Aufje Corsen,</i>
54 Cornelia Veghte,	67 <i>Cornelia Croesen,</i>
55 Vacant,	68 <i>Gerret Croesen,</i>
56 Helena Croesen,	69 <i>——— Simonse,</i>
57 Elisabet Corsen, Sister Bock,	70 Cornelia <i>———</i>
58 Maria Praal,	71 De Nakomelings van (the descendants of) Catharine Hoogelandt,
59 Catrina Berckelo,	72 Vacant,
60 Sara Elles,	73 Knelia <i>—— rieke,</i>
61 Arayaentie Elles,	74 Magritje Gerrode,
62 Elizabeth Baker,	75 Jaannetje Van Woggelom,
63 Sara Post,	76 Maria Beekman,
64 Belitie De Groot,	77 Fermie Van B <i>——,</i>
65 Elizabeth De Groot,	78 Vacant,
66 Aeyea Speer,	79 Fytje Mersereau,
67 Vacant,	80 Lena Van Wagene,
68 Maria Mersereau,	81 Maria Prall,
69 Fransyntje Post, and another erased,	82 Annetje fountain,
60 <i>Marijrita Simonse,</i>	83 Wintje Van Tuyls,
61 <i>Marritje Burbank,</i>	84 Rebecca Staats.
62 <i>Nelice Vreelandt,</i>	
63 <i>Aimatie Martlinghs,</i>	

It will be observed that the numbers from 60 to 69, both inclusive, are duplicated. It will also be observed that according to the universal custom in the olden times, the sexes were separated in their seats.

Across the ends of 76, 77 and 78 are written the words "Stoelen voor den Predikant"—Chairs for the Preacher.

This was the second church edifice; it was built about 1714, partially destroyed by fire by the British early in the revolution as a rebel church, and what was left standing was subsequently blown down, in a heavy gale.

The name of Daniel Corsen does not appear among those of the pew-holders; but as he was generally the incumbent of some civil office, his seat was in No. 1 or 2. He was county clerk at the time he made the diagram.

Soon after the settlement of Dr. Van Pelt the plan of rebuilding the church at Richmond was revived, and through the energetic efforts of the pastor, it was carried successfully into execution. The church now standing was built, and ready for service in July, 1808, when it was dedicated; the Rev. Dr. Livingston, of New York, conducting the services. From that time on Doctor Van Pelt ministered to this church and that at the north side until 1835, when Doctor Brownlee, his successor, ministered to both until 1853. The connection between the two churches was dissolved in 1854, when the church in Richmond became a distinct and separate ecclesiastical organization. Its first pastor after that event was the Rev. Thomas R. G. Peck,



and his successors have been Rev. Erskine N. White, Rev. Jacob Fehrmann, Rev. J. H. Sinclair, and the pulpit was for a while supplied alternately with that of the church of the Huguenots, by Rev. Dr. F. M. Kip. This church has a chapel at Gifford's.

The building of a new church was talked of in 1818, and Governor Tompkins gave two lots at Tompkinsville, on which to erect it. The work was commenced and the corner stone laid October 20, 1818. The church was completed, and dedicated July 23, 1820. Rev. Peter I. Van Pelt of the Port Richmond church occupied the pulpit till May, 1823, when this church became a distinct society and separate charge, its incorporation being effected the same year. This enterprise was carried to completion through the perseverance of Doctor Van Pelt, assisted by the munificence of Vice-President Tompkins, who donated the land and contributed a large sum of money toward building the church. Doctor Van Pelt supplied the pulpit until 1823, when, as an independent church, the Rev. John E. Miller became its pastor. He was installed October 19, 1823, and for nearly twenty-four years was pastor of the church. He died August 24, 1847, and the Rev. Alexander R. Thompson became the second pastor, in 1848. During his incumbency, some of the members withdrew their connection, and organized a church at Stapleton, nearer their own residences, with which Mr. Thompson identified himself, after having served this church three years and three months. The vacancy thus left by him was filled by the Rev. Philip M. Brett, who was installed December 24, 1851, and died January 14, 1860. He was succeeded by the Rev. Edward W. Hitchcock, who was ordained and installed August 8, 1860. It was his first pastorate. He resigned March 1, 1866. It was during his pastorate that the new church edifice was built, on what is known as Brighton Heights, on a hill commanding a fine view of the bay, New York city and Long Island. The corner stone of this church was laid October 27, 1863, and it was dedicated November 3, 1864. The cost of the church was \$14,300. Its site is diagonally opposite the northwest corner of the old quarantine grounds.

The old church building was sold, and has since been used for a variety of purposes, at times as a feed store, confectionery shop, political headquarters and carriage shop, in which use it



is still occupied. Some of the older people, as well as the former pastors, who have precious memories connected with religious work within the ancient edifice, deplore the action which consigned the building to such unhallowed uses. It may justly be claimed that a respectful regard for the good and faithful ones who founded the church, and the pious men and women who maintained its services during so many years of its history, and a wholesome reverence for the cause it represented, ought to have prompted those who had the management of the matter, to have held the building from the purposes of secular business, for the possibilities of further use in connection with some of the enterprises of the church.

Rev. Herman R. Timlow was installed October 24, 1866, and resigned November 1, 1867. Rev. L. Ralston Smith supplied the pulpit in 1868. Rev. Thomas G. Watson was installed May 13, 1869, and resigned September 11, 1871. Rev. William T. Enyard was installed April 13, 1873, and resigned on account of ill health, July 13, 1879. He died April 26, 1880. Rev. William Walton Clark, the succeeding pastor was installed March 16, 1880. During his pastorate, the church was entirely released from debt, and a beautiful Sunday school and lecture room was built in the rear of the church. The expense of building and furnishing the Sunday school and lecture room, and repairing and refurnishing the church in 1881, amounted to \$9,980.73.

#### THE ANCIENT BAPTISMAL RECORD OF THE EARLY DUTCH CHURCH.

This book, beginning in 1696, and containing apparently a complete record of the baptisms of the early Dutch church on Staten Island for a period of more than half a century, is still in existence, being now in the keeping of the consistory of the Dutch Reformed church at Port Richmond. This venerable and valuable relic several years ago fell into bad company and became degraded to the level of common garret rubbish. While in this condition, and just as it was about to be consigned to a bonfire by those who had no knowledge of its value, it was rescued from destruction by Mr. Alfred de Groot, who promptly placed it in the hands of its proper custodians. Its records contain valuable genealogical data touching almost every old family of the island and many others. It is written in Dutch, and is now considerably defaced by time and wear,



and much of it quite difficult to read. Those who would consult it also find a still greater difficulty in the utter absence of any order in its arrangement, so that to surely find whether any desired name is contained in it or not, the whole book must be gone through. These obstacles united render the record practically a "sealed book," except to those who have the ability to read faded Dutch manuscript, and the time and patience to search through such a long list to find the names they wish to see. Believing that the service of unlocking this sealed treasure will be appreciated by those who may have occasion to refer to it, we have transcribed the entire list, as far as it has any genealogical significance, and have arranged the entries all in the alphabetic order of the surnames of the fathers.

The custom prevailed of baptizing children at a very tender age. In the early years of the record occasionally the date of birth is given together with the date of baptism, as in the following entry :

"Cornelis Tyssen zyne gedoopte Kinderen zyn Dochter Elizabeth is gebooren den 1705 28 van May ende heeft zynen Doop ontfangen den 2 Augustus De Getuygen bennen Leenert Smack de ende Sara Smack."

In the very early records it will be noticed the mother's name is not given. In most cases two "getuygen" or witnesses, names appear in connection with each baptism, though in some only one appears, and in others none at all.

The record contains many old Dutch words and phrases now more or less obsolete, which, through the kindness of Dr. Brownlee, who has made the book a matter of considerable study, we are able to bring together in the following list, with their parallel English words or expression. We give the Dutch in Roman type, and the corresponding English in italics :

Ouwders—*parents*; kinderen—*children*; getruygen—*witnesses*; gedoopt—*baptized*; den—*the or then*; de—*the*; van—*of*; dese—*these*; zyne—*his or her*; soon, or zoon—*son*; bennen—*are*; dochter—*daughter*; en—*and*; geboren—*born*; met—*with*; gemelle, or tweelings—*twins*; bediening—*office, employment or service*; heeft—*has*; de compeer—*god-father*; de peet—*god-mother*; doop—*baptism*; Christelycken—*Christian*; ontfangen—*obtained or received*; haar, or haaren—*her*; vervolgh—*continuation*; eene—*a or one*; voor—*for*; op—*of*; het—*the*; genaemt





—*is named* ; *zie—see* ; *dezer—this* ; *donderdag—Thursday* ; *dingsday—Tuesday* ; *sonne opgang—sunrise* ; *ontrent—about* ; *Heeren—the Lord* ; *naam—name* ; *opgegeven—given up*.

The book also contains records of later date, of children baptized by Rev. William Jackson for the Reformed Protestant Dutch church at the north side of Staten Island, July 9, 1786 to October 29 of the same year, 7: in the "new church at the North Side," from May 27, 1787 to October 11, 1789, 31: by Rev. Peter Stryker, from October 17, 1790 to November 14, same year, 9. Mr. Stryker was installed in this church by Mr. Livingston, Thursday, November 11, 1790. The record of baptisms was kept by Mr. A. Ryersz. The fee of one, or sometimes two shillings, which was sometimes paid, was duly entered. The names of "parents or witnesses" accompany the entry of each baptism in that list in such a way as to leave no way of distinguishing between the two classes, hence the omission of all names on that list.

The title page bears the following inscription:

"Register Book Van De K——d Namen Der Kinderen Dewelck Gedoopt Bennen Op Staten Eylandt Van D—— Beginne Van flet Jaer Anno 1696."

In the following list, the date of baptism is followed by the names of child, father and mother, in the order mentioned.

Oct. 8, 1721, Hilletje, Gozen Adriaansz, Femmetje vand'rBilt.  
 May 17, 1724, Leah, Jan Andrevet, Leah Sweem.  
 Apr. 7, 1729, Jan, Jan Andrevet, Leah Sweem.  
 Aug. 26, 1722, Neeltje, Jan Andrevet, Leah Sweem.  
 Mar. 27, 1720, Rebecca, Pieter Andrevet, Rebecca Cole.  
 Dec. 25, 1723, Elisabet, Pieter Andrevet, Rebecca Cole.  
 Jan. 1, 1726, Elisabet and Anna, twins, Pieter Andrevet, Rebecca Cole.  
 Mar. 25, 1701, Andrys, Andrys Andryssen.  
 — 1707, Lontys, Joseph Bastido.  
 July, 3, 1707, Rossanna, Joseph Bastido.  
 July, 20, 1711, Bastido, Joseph Bastido.  
 May 4, 1714 Jan, Joseph Bastido.  
 Jan. 18, 1717, maria, Joseph Bastido.  
 Oct. 18, 1719, Pieter, Joseph Bastido, Judith Ryke.  
 Apr. 22, 1707, Tryntie, Nicolaas Backer.  
 Oct. 31, 1756, Jacob, Niclos Backer, Liesabet toret.  
 Feb. 26, 1758, Mary, Niclos Backer, Liesabet Latoret.  
 Oct. 21, 1707, Nicolaas, Hendricus Backer.  
 Aug. 24, 1729, Catharina, Jacobus Bakker, Rebecca Staats.  
 Jan. 30, 1734, Nicolaas, Jacobus Bakker, Rebecca Staats.  
 Mar. 28, 1736, Geertje, Jan Barbank, Leah Hagewout.  
 Dec. 8, 1728, Thomas, Jan Barbank, Leah Hagewout.  
 Mar. 28, 1736, Maria, Lucas Barbank, Martha Baile.



Jan. 16, 1732, Maria, Jan Barbank, Lea Hagewout.  
 Apr. 13, 1742, Catharina, Lucas Barrabank, Martha Baely.  
 Oct. 11, 1719, Maria, Thomas Barbanck, Marritje Martling.  
 Sep. 22, 1723, Abraham, Pieter Barbarie, Elisabet du Secoy.  
 Jan. 1, 1729, Cornelia, Jacob Bergen, Maria Croesen.  
 Sep. 23, 1731, Jacob, Jacob Bergen, Maria Croesen.  
 May 6, 1745, Grietje, Jacob Bergen, Grietje Bennet.  
 June 10, 1747, Gerretye, Jacob bergen, Margrietye bennet.  
 May 3, 1749, adriaen, Jacob Bergen, maragreta Bennet.  
 Sept. 4, 1737, Cornelia, Jacob Bergen, Maria Croesen.  
 Apr. 29, 1722, Gerritje, Fredrik Bergen, Gerritje Veghte.  
 Sept. 26, 1725, Henrik, Frederik Bergen, Gerritje Veghte.  
 Mar. 12, 1732, Elsje, Fredrik Bergen, Gerritje Veghte.  
 May 21, 1727, Elisabet, Jacob Bennet, Elisabet Brouwer.  
 May 26, 1729, Willem, Jacob Bennet, Elisabet Brouwer.  
 Dec. 20, 1724, Juriaan, Jacob Bennet, Elizabet Brouwer.  
 Sept. 24, 1732, Cornelius, Jacob Bennet, Elisabet Brouwer.  
 Oct. 28, 1722, Aaltje, Jacob Bennet, Elizabet Brouwer.  
 Apr. 22, 1707, Aeltje, Thomas Berbanck.  
 Nov. 2, 1754, Cattriena, Abraham Beckelo, Cattriena Ebis.  
 July 28, —, Gerret, —, Berkelo, —, Elles.  
 Oct. 13, 1747, cornelius, Abraham berkelau, cattrina Ellis.  
 Oct. 19, 1708, Daniel, Issac Bellin.  
 Mar. 14, 1726, Maria, Jacobus Biebaut, Maria Sweem.  
 May 5, 1729, Petrus, Jacobus Biebant, marytje Sweem.  
 Feb. 19, 1727, Elisabet, Jacobus Biebant, Maria Sweem.  
 July 16, 1721, Jacobus, Jacobus Biebant, Maria Sweems.  
 Nov. 2, 1718, Isaak, Teunis Bogaart, Catharina Hegeman.  
 Dec. 18, 1720, Adriaan, Teunis Bogaart, Catharina Hegeman.  
 Dec. 30, 1722, Margareta, Simon Bogaart, Margrietje Ten Eyk.  
 Jan. 19, 1729, Gysbert, Simon Bogaart, Margrietje ten Eyk.  
 Oct. 18, 1719, Elisabet, Simon Bogaart, Margrietje ten Eik.  
 May 19, 1726, Simon, Simon Bogaart, Margrietje Ten Eyk.  
 Apr. 21, 1723, Abraham, Teunis Bogaart, Catharina Hegeman.  
 Mar. 28, 1725, Maria, Teunis Bogaart, Catharina Hegeman.  
 Mar. 2, 1729, Cornelius, Teunis Bogaart, Catharina Hegeman.  
 Feb. 13, 1732, Sarah, Simon Bogaart, Margrietje Ten Eyk.  
 Nov. 29, 1719, Jean, Francois Bodin, Maria Dey.  
 Nov. 3, 1754, Eliesebeth, Nettenel Bos, Jannetye Post.  
 Sept. 17, 1758, Gerret, Nettenel bos, Jannetye Post.  
 — — 1706, Samuel, Josua Bosch.  
 May 6, 1745, Antje, Nicklas Bos, Elisabet Drenkwater.  
 Sept. 8, 1734, Barent, Nicolaas Bosch, Elisabet Drinkwater.  
 Nov. 21, 1731, Margareta, Nicolaas Bosch, Elisabet Drinkwater.  
 July 13, 1740, Nicolaas, Nicolaas Bosch, Elisabet Drinkwater.  
 Nov. 24, 1728, Eduard, Nicolaas Bosch, Elisabet Drenkwater.  
 Dec. 11, 1737, Samuel, Louis du Bois Jun'r, Catharina van Brunt.  
 Apr. 22, 1718, Anna, James Bosler, Sara Pereine.  
 Apr. 1, 1728, Forms, Andries Bowman.  
 Mar. 20, 1716, Andries, Andries Bowman.  
 May 6, 1745, aeltje, Cornelus Bowman, Aeltje Titus.  
 Apr. 19, 1715, Neeltje, Cornelis Bouwman.



- Sept. 14, 1742, Neeltje, Jacob bowman, Maria Williams.  
 Jan. 16, 1732, Harmen, Pieter Bouwman, Elsje van Pelt.  
 Sept. 14, 1742, Neeltje, pieter bowman, Elsje Van pelt.  
 Apr. 23, 1739, Pieter, Pieter Bouwman, Elsje van Pelt.  
 July 24, 1710, Joris, Harmen Bowman.  
 Oct. 23, 1711, Tryntie, Harmen Bowman.  
 May 4, 1714, Jacob, Harmen Bowman.  
 June 15, 1716, Cornelis, Harmen Bowman, Neeltje Staats.  
 May 15, 1720, Neeltje, Cornelis Bouwman, Antje Staats.  
 Apr. 22, 1707, Elisabeth, Jores Bowman.  
 Sept. 22, 1709, Johanna, Jores Bowman.  
 Feb. 12, 1758, Catriena, Antony brat, neety haagewout.  
 July 20, 1718, Cornelis, Cornelis Brees, Sara Schilmans.  
 Aug. 18, 1741, Jan, Johannes Brestede, Trintie Hagewout.  
 Aug. 16, 1743, Pieter, Johannes Brestede, Treintje hagewout.  
 Apr. 22, 1746, Eckbert, Johannes brestede, Catherina hagewouyt.  
 ——— 1715, Johannes, Willem breetstede.  
 ——— 1715, Andries, Willem breetstede.  
 Jan. 18, 1719, Andries, Willem Breetstede, Christina Bouwman.  
 Aug. 13, 1721, Engeltje, Willem Breetstede, Christina Bouwman.  
 Sept. 9, 1722, Henrik, Henrik Bries, Dina du Cecoy.  
 Jan. 31, 1725, Sara, Henrik Bries, Dina du Secoy.  
 Apr. 9, 1732, Sara, Nathanael Britton, Esther Billeville.  
 Apr. 23, 1707, Jeams, Joseph Britten.  
 Oct. 11, 1708, William, Nicolaes Britten.  
 Apr. 20, 1740, Maria, John Brown, Susanne Roseau.  
 Aug. 16, 1743, Jan, Jan burbanck, Leea hagewout.  
 Apr. 22, 1746, Abraham, John burbanck, Lea hagewout.  
 Feb. 23, 1724, Nathan, Elias Burger, Susanna Whitman.  
 Oct. 19, 1718, Samuel, Samuel Burnet, Obiit, Antje Mangels Ral.  
 June 8, 1735, Sara, James Butler, Sara Parain.  
 Apr. 9, 1732, Jan, James Butler, Sara Parem.  
 Nov. 18, 1733, Andries, Dirk Cadmus, Jannetje van Hoorn.  
 Oct. 31, 1731, Cathrina, Dirk Cadmus, Jannetje van Hoorn.  
 July 19, 1724, Rutgers, Dirk Cadmus, Jannetje van Hoorn.  
 Dec. 11, 1720, Frederyk, Dirk Cadmus, Jannetye van Hoorn.  
 Apr. 22, 1746, Elizabeth, Jan Cahon, maria Egberts.  
 Aug. 20, 1739, Catharina, Jean Canon, Maria Egberts.  
 July 10, 1718, Jacobus, John Canone, Maria Egberts.  
 Oct. 22, 1707, Margriete, Benjamin Carenton.  
 June 6, 1715, Jannetie, Joseph Carrinton.  
 Nov. 29, 1719, Philip, Philip Casier, Catharina Hooghlant.  
 Aug. 28, 1726, Casparus, Jsak Caspers, Elisabet Lisk.  
 Jan. 21, 1739, Cornelia and Antje, twins, Johannes Cavelier, Catlyntje Andriessen.  
 April 10, 1726, Jacobus, Phillippe Cazier, Catharina Hooghlant.  
 Mar. 15, 1724, Dirk, Philip Cazier, Catharina Hooghlant.  
 Jan. 14, 1722, Catharina, Philip Cazier, Catharina Hooghlant.  
 Aug. 23, 1730, Petrus, Phillippe Cazier, Catharina Hooghlant.  
 Sept. 14, 1718, Elsje, Pieter Ceilo, Blandina van Pelt.  
 Oct. 14, 1722, Peter, Pieter Ceilo, Blandina van Pelt.  
 June 6, 1725, Cornelia, Peter Ceilo, Blandina van Pelt.















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